The Epistle of Jude

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Introduction

Although the Epistle of Jude is recognised as one of the earliest letters in the New Testament, it has nevertheless been placed near the end of the Bible. This epistle speaks primarily about the sixth dispensation and will only receive its full application in the future. The believers of that dispensation will live before the Lord is revealed upon the throne of His glory. They are called to His kingdom. While awaiting that kingdom, they have this Epistle of Jude. It deals with natural man in general—the ungodly person who does not have the Spirit. The epistle is therefore not about believers living according to the old nature, nor about unfaithful children of God. While there are certainly outward similarities between unfaithful children of God and unbelievers in the world, there is also a great difference between the two. The world is heading towards its destruction, whereas the children of God are saved from judgement and will share in the glory of Christ. Jude warns against the condition of the world, so that believers might recognise it and keep themselves separate from it.

The Epistle of Jude is not particularly well known, yet the thoughts it presents are very familiar, since they also appear in the epistles of Paul. In terms of line of thought, the Epistle of Jude closely resembles the second epistle of Peter.
Nevertheless, the starting point of the two epistles is different. Although both letters frequently use the same expressions, they address different matters. Peter, in his second epistle, speaks about children of God who have become unfaithful to the Lord. Jude speaks about mankind in general. He describes the natural condition of man. Outwardly there are many similarities between unfaithful children of God and unbelievers in the world. Yet there remains a profound difference between the two. The world is hurrying towards its ruin, while the children of God are delivered from judgement and will partake in the glory of Christ. Jude is therefore not speaking about unfaithful children of God, but about unbelievers. He warns against the state of the world so that believers might recognise it and distance themselves from it. Believers do not belong to the world and ought to separate themselves from the thinking of that world.
For example, in Jude 4

> For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here reference is made to “certain men” who have crept in secretly. The greater part of the Epistle of Jude concerns these “certain men”. Jude sets them before the believers so that they might recognise them. “Crept in unawares” indicates that it may have happened without being noticed at first. They have slipped in stealthily. Jude describes how these people operate, so that believers can identify them. These “certain men” are

described in various ways, and various things are said about them. A few examples:

- They are ungodly (v. 4).
  This word literally means that they fail to give honour to the One to whom honour is due. They give honour to no one—and certainly not to God. They acknowledge no one above themselves and thereby make themselves into a god (see also v. 15). They have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness: they use God's grace as an excuse for licentiousness.
- They are dreamers / "in sleep" (v. 8).
  "These" refers back to the "certain men" of verse 4. Whoever is asleep is unaware of the reality around them. They do not know reality because they are unbelieving (see v. 5).
- They are ignorant (v. 10).
  "These" again refers to the "certain men". They speak evil of things they do not understand. They know nothing, because they are asleep and because they are unbelieving.
- They are clouds without water (v. 12).
  "Clouds without water" look like clouds, but produce no rain. In Scripture, "clouds" represent spiritual things, while "water" represents the Word of God—the Word brought forth by the Spirit. These people appear very spiritual, yet they bring forth no life (no Word of God).
- They are raging waves of the sea (v. 13).

In the Bible the sea is a picture of the nations (Revelation 17:15)
And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.
The nations rage and imagine vain things (Psalm 2:1). Just as waves produce foam, so these ungodly men foam out their own shame.
These "certain men" deny God, the only Sovereign—the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 4). One ought to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Sovereign, because He is God! Yet they "despise dominion" (v. 8)—clearly the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Sovereign.
Jude was not one of the twelve apostles (compare v. 17). He was the brother of James (1 Corinthians 9:5; 15:7), who also wrote an epistle. This James was a brother of the Lord Jesus, and therefore Jude was as well (compare Mark 6:3). James and Jude were heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ during His absence. James was the first rightful heir (after the Lord Jesus Christ) to the throne of David.
Jude writes concerning the "common salvation" (v. 3)—the salvation spoken of throughout the whole Bible. This common salvation indicates that the fallen world would be reconciled to God through the One specially sent for that purpose. This ordinary salvation signifies that God, through His Son, accomplishes reconciliation so that the creation might be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:19)
To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

This common salvation provides a restoration plan for creation in general. Not every person will have a share in it, for whoever will not (whoever does not believe) will have no part in it. Only believers—those who accept God's plan of restoration—will share in it, because they submit themselves to God. From Adam onwards the Saviour was promised. He has now come. He died and rose again. Since His resurrection, the same message has been preached as was preached by the Old Testament prophets: the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. God has made Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). This glorified Christ would establish His kingdom. Peter refers to the prophets (Acts 3:21). Peter and the other disciples expected an earthly kingdom in which the promises made on earth would be fulfilled to them.

Until the beginning of the Book of Acts, nowhere is it stated that believers would have a heavenly calling or that believers would go to heaven. "Heaven" in Scripture describes a place higher than the earth, both literally and figuratively. The heavenly calling of the believer is first revealed by the Apostle Paul. This heavenly calling does not belong to the "common" salvation, but to the "special" (uncommon) salvation. The salvation believers now receive is a special salvation because it is received not in connection with the earth, but in connection with heaven. It is a higher salvation, about which the Old Testament speaks nowhere literally, nor do the other apostolic epistles (James through Jude). This special salvation is communicated and explained only by Paul.

Insofar as we recognise the heavenly position of the believer in the Gospels, it is because we have already learned it from Paul's epistles. If we recognise this truth in the Old Testament, it is because we know it from Paul's letters and have learned how to read/place this truth within Old Testament prophecy. This can only be done by careful comparison of texts. These are not literal fulfilments, but figurative applications.

The special salvation is found only in Paul. Believers in our present dispensation have a share in both the common salvation and the special salvation. We belong to the church of the firstfruits and receive a double portion! In practice this means both an earthly and a heavenly portion.

> 1 Timothy 4:8
> For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Bodily exercise has little profit, but the exercise of godliness has two beneficial effects: the promise of the life that now is, and the promise of the life which is to come. The exercise of godliness therefore has effect both for life here below and for the heavenly life. In the early days of our dispensation there was the common salvation, with an expectation of a future on earth—namely, the coming again of Christ. They expected this in their own generation. They anticipated the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom, so that the Jews might be delivered from the world empire of that time. These things will take place in the future for the benefit of believing Jews. They will then be delivered from the world empire that will exist in the future. They expected the revelation of Christ on earth.

Later, however, the Apostle Paul came forward. He explained that for the present there would be no earthly kingdom. He revealed a higher truth: the kingdom of Christ will indeed appear literally on earth in the future. But in the time when His kingdom does not appear on earth, there is nevertheless a kingdom—not here on earth, but in heaven. The believer must learn to understand how the kingdom of Christ now functions and in what way he himself has obtained a share in it.

Paul teaches that the believer has not only died and been raised with Christ, but has also been seated with Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6). This principle applies from the moment of Christ's ascension. Paul speaks of the days of the hidden kingdom in which we now live, and explains that the believer of the present Church receives not only an earthly but also a heavenly portion. The hidden kingdom was not preached immediately after the resurrection, because in the first years after the resurrection Israel was given the opportunity to come to faith in the Messiah. Israel did not do so. God then first took out from the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14). This, however, was only stated years after the resurrection. In the first years Israel was given a serious opportunity to accept the Lord Jesus as Messiah, but Israel rejected Him as Lord and Messiah.

The Church of the present (fifth) dispensation is still on earth. This Church will be taken up entirely into heaven. At that, all believers of the fifth dispensation who have already died will also be included (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). It is a collective gathering of the Church. This will take place in the future. At the rapture the Church will have reached its heavenly destiny. After that, the common salvation will again be preached. Although the common salvation is still preached today, Paul adds many things to it. After the rapture, it will no longer be preached that the believer receives a heavenly citizenship, because he will not belong to the Church of the present dispensation. Instead, the revelation of the kingdom will again be spoken of. Acts 3 will then become relevant once more.

With the dawning of the new covenant, the Word of God was completed in accordance with what had been announced in the Old Testament. The hidden portion of the Word of God was at last revealed in the New Testament. The Bible is the complete Word of God. During the time of the New Testament the Pauline epistles were written, in which the truth of the present (fifth) dispensation is brought forward. At the same time, however, it was also necessary to speak openly about the manner in which the revealed kingdom would be established on earth, and to preach what would happen while awaiting that revealed kingdom—in other words, the time after the sufferings that would come upon Christ, and the glory that would follow later (1 Peter 1:11). This does not refer specifically to our (fifth) dispensation, but to the future: the events that will take place after the rapture of the Church. That is the period that would come after the sufferings of Christ and before the glory that will be revealed to Him here on earth.

In the early period of the Book of Acts, roughly from the day of Pentecost until the calling of Paul, the special salvation was not made known. At that time, matters were communicated that will be fully applicable to the days

following the rapture of the Church. It is then that the special salvation will have been fulfilled. In the beginning of Acts, the circumstances were the same as those that will arise on earth after the “rapture” of the Church (the Body of Christ). Then, once again, the gospel of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ will be preached, and people will live in expectation of the revelation of His kingdom upon the earth. This was precisely the case at the beginning of Acts. This formed the very soil in which the apostolic epistles (from James through to Jude) could grow. Although the epistles of James and Jude are recognised as the oldest letters in the New Testament, they have nevertheless been placed near the end of the Bible, because they only become fully relevant in the future. In the days when they were written they were indeed current, but their full application will only come in the time to come. In our own days (during the fifth dispensation) we know a greater fulness, namely in the glorified Christ, seated at the right hand of God. We have a heavenly citizenship. This Pauline truth—that the believer has been seated with Christ in the heavenlies—will be sought in vain in the apostolic epistles. Even in the epistles of John it is not mentioned. Although 1 Peter 1:4 states that there is “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”, it does not say that these believers will go to heaven to take possession of that inheritance. That inheritance is the kingdom. It is now in heaven, and in the future it will be revealed to those to whom Peter was speaking (or thought he was speaking). The apostolic epistles will become current in the future. Then they will contain the full salvation. They direct the eye exclusively towards the very near future of the Son of Man.

We look forward to the future appearing of the Lord, as presented in the apostolic epistles. We anticipate the revelation of His kingdom. We naturally also await the “rapture” of the Church, but this is not found in the epistles from John through to Jude. The rapture takes place before that time. It is an additional truth, and is therefore found with Paul. We fix our gaze upward—not only towards the future, but especially towards heaven, because that is where we receive our blessings. Believers in the present (fifth) dispensation have received a heavenly citizenship.

> Philippians 3:20
> For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

It does not say that we look for the Saviour (though that is true); rather, it says that our citizenship is where He is. Believers in our dispensation have received more than the common salvation; yet it is not something other than the common salvation. The apostolic epistles will become relevant in the future, but they were written by those (James, Peter, John, and Jude) who were part of the same Church of which you and I, by God’s grace, are now members. After they had written these epistles, they still had to learn that their future did not lie in “the thousand years”, but in heaven. Their future was not awaiting the distant future (after 2000 years; see 2 Peter 3:8), but was/is in the present. They were already, even then, partakers in the hidden kingdom of Christ.

In the Epistle of Jude we subsequently find a description of the ungodly in the world. This refers to the ungodly in the world of that time (in Jude’s

day). It certainly also applies to the world of the future. And it likewise applies to the ungodly who lived and live during the present (fifth) dispensation. The description of ungodly mankind covers the period from the resurrection of Christ onwards. Ungodly mankind has rejected the one Lord and Christ, whereas believers have accepted that Lord and Christ. Believers do not blaspheme or deny His dominion; on the contrary, they live from His dominion and from His glorified position. In the initial period of the fifth dispensation, the truths concerning the Church were not yet known. It was in that time that the apostolic epistles were written—epistles that will receive their full fulfilment and application only in the future. Whoever does not understand the common salvation will certainly not understand the special salvation. One must first grasp how the matters relating to the old covenant fit together. That old covenant was a foreshadowing of the new covenant, which has been in force since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We now live in the days of the new covenant. This new covenant also has a higher, heavenly application compared with the old covenant. In retrospect, we see that this higher aspect of the new covenant was already spoken of in the promise to Abraham, and also in the symbolism of the law. The truths concerning the Church are pictured therein, but they were only made known after the resurrection of Christ—through the ministry of Paul. The Church truths were not known at the beginning of the fifth dispensation. From this, however, one cannot conclude that the Church of the fifth dispensation only came into existence after those Church truths had been communicated. Some believe that the Church could not possibly have begun at the resurrection of Christ (or at Pentecost), because the Church truths were not yet known at that time. This is incorrect. The Church truths were not yet known, but the Church did begin then. Moreover, the Church had to exist first before anything could be made known to her. This same principle applies to the fourth dispensation—that of the law. That dispensation began at the exodus from Egypt, but the law itself was given only fifty days later, at Sinai. Ultimately, the law spoke of what would happen once the people had entered the land, and that still took another forty years. The dispensation of the law began with the exodus from Egypt. Only after that dispensation had started were its characteristics made known. The Church came into being through the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Fifty days later it was actually preached. Only with the calling and ministry of the Apostle Paul were the specific Church truths made known—truths that rise above the common salvation. These Church truths speak not only of the restitution of all things, of which the prophets have spoken (Acts 3:21), but also of the calling of the Church, the heavenly citizenship, and the heavenly inheritance. These truths do not appear in the apostolic epistles. The apostolic epistles have a largely horizontal (earthward) character. This is true even of the epistles of John. This explains certain exceptional matters mentioned in the apostolic epistles, such as:

- The anointing with oil (James 5:14–15) will be literally applied in the next dispensation. The next (sixth) dispensation lasts forty years. It is not the intention that believers in the next dispensation should

die, for the kingdom has been promised to them. If someone is in danger of dying because of illness, he ought to be healed so that he may enter the kingdom. Therefore healing takes place, and some are even raised from the dead.

- The Epistle of James is specially addressed to “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (James 1:1). We know from Scripture that “salvation” has nothing to do with lineage. This epistle is addressed to the twelve tribes because the earthly kingdom will first be established over Israel. It will come first to the two tribes, and then to the ten tribes. Only afterwards will it extend to the other nations. When believers are spoken of who are still awaiting the full revelation of the kingdom, those believers are, in the first place, those from Israel. Hence the opening address of this epistle. Believers from Israel will first receive the message, so that they may then preach it to the Gentiles. In the next dispensation too, there will be no distinction between Jew and Gentile, for both have only one way of salvation.

Shortly after the resurrection, the message was first preached in Jerusalem; then in Judaea (the Jewish state). Next the message was preached in Samaria, because Samaria was the capital of the ten-tribes kingdom. Finally the message went “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). So it will be again in the future: first preaching to Israel, and then preaching through Israel. Scoffers will come who mock the promise of His coming (2 Peter 3:3–4). During the first 3½ years after the rapture of the Church, the gospel will certainly be preached in Jerusalem—by the two witnesses (Revelation 11:1 ff.). These two witnesses will be killed, after which 3½ years of great tribulation will follow (Matthew 24:15 ff.; especially v. 21). The 3½ years of great tribulation will culminate in the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives. This is not in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem there will then be deliverance (Joel 2:32). This means that the believing remnant from Jerusalem will be saved. The kingdom will not be established at that moment, for Jerusalem will then be completely devastated. People will flee into the wilderness (compare Zechariah 14:1–4). The kingdom will exist and will be at work, but it will not yet be visible (not yet manifested). After the Lord’s coming to the Mount of Olives, it will still take 33 years before the kingdom is actually established over the whole earth. During that total period of 40 years the apostolic epistles will be applicable (see further explanation in the study on the dispensations). Peter says that those scoffers will be proved wrong. “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8). That makes two days (compare Hosea 6:2) of a thousand years each. When this epistle of Peter becomes current, those two thousand years will just have passed, and His coming (Greek: parousia = presence) will be more actual than ever. Peter is not speaking about the rapture of the Church, but about the judgement of the great day of God (2 Peter 3:7, 12).“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1; the antichrist; many antichrists; 1 John 2:18). In the days of John there were already many antichrists. This is also

true of our own days. Yet he also speaks of the Antichrist, who has still not come. The epistles of John too can only be literally and fully applied in the next dispensation. The Antichrist will come in the future, but in the time leading up to that, the working (the spirit) of the antichrist is already discernible (1 John 4:3). The spirit of the antichrist is being revealed. When that happens depends on how well one can see. Mysteries are revealed at the moment they are perceived. When one knows how and where to perceive them, one sees them sooner than someone who has no knowledge of them. The Antichrist becomes manifest on the day of the rapture. Yet the Bible teaches that he is only revealed later—indeed, clearly only after the seventieth week (Daniel 9:24). During the 33 years the throne of the beast (out of the sea; Revelation 13:1–10) will stand in Babel. Only then will the Antichrist (the beast out of the earth; Revelation 13:11 ff.) come into his true “greatness”. His power will become truly manifest only after the Lord’s appearing on the Mount of Olives. At His return Jerusalem will be destroyed, and only then will the great days of Babel begin. Believers who have been instructed by the Word of God already perceive him earlier! The epistle of John becomes current only after the rapture of the Church. From the moment John wrote the epistle, it will still be 2000 years before the Antichrist is revealed.
Jude speaks of a judgement upon the ungodly (Jude 15). This judgement obviously does not take place at the rapture of the Church. This judgement will occur much later. It is not about the great tribulation in the days of Christ’s return, but about the judgement after the end of the thousand years (Revelation 20:11–15). Jude does not speak about the rapture of the Church. It is not known whether he was aware of that rapture. The Epistle of Jude becomes current only after the rapture—during the sixth dispensation (forty years) and during the seventh dispensation (the thousand years).

Jude 1
Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:
Jude was a servant of Jesus Christ. He was also a brother of the Lord, but his ministry did not rest on that fact. Jude was the brother of James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem. James was likewise a brother of the Lord Jesus. Jude writes to “them that are sanctified by God the Father”. He writes to believers. “Called” does not refer to those to whom the Word of God is spoken, but to those who have accepted the gospel. Whoever does not believe is not called, because one only receives a share in God’s calling after coming to faith. God has called only believers. “Called” means believers. They have been justified (Romans 8:30). They have a share in the resurrection of Christ and have been begotten again unto a living hope (1 Peter 1:3). “Hope” points to the future expectation to which they have been called. They have been called to His kingdom and look forward to it. While awaiting that, they have this Epistle of Jude.
Epistles are not written to people in general, but are intended for the addressees and may only be read by them. This is also true of the epistles in the Bible. It is striking that the New Testament contains many epistles,

whereas the Old Testament has none (in the form found in the New Testament). A large part of the New Testament consists of epistles because their content is not intended for mankind in general. They are intended only for those to whom they are addressed. These always prove to be believers. That is why unbelievers understand so little of them. The epistles were not written to them. Believers are able to understand the epistles, because they have been made competent for that purpose. They have received the Spirit of God, so that they might know the things that are freely given to them by God (1 Corinthians 2:12). The believer (who has been born again) has received that Spirit and is therefore able to understand the epistles. The unbeliever will not be able to understand them.

The called ones to the kingdom are sanctified by God the Father. This is deeply encouraging. God is called “Father” here because the believers have been called to sonship. “Father” also indicates that He is the Giver. The called ones receive their sanctification from the Father. God is holy. He gives His holiness, and is therefore called “Father”. When God judges, He is never called “Father”. Although the called ones have been sanctified, they must also be sanctified (compare Revelation 22:11). This sanctification is not accomplished by the believers themselves. Believers are sanctified by God, who is the Father (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The heavenly Father, who is a holy God, sanctifies the believers. Believers are to yield themselves to this process of sanctification. In other words: they must allow themselves to be sanctified by the Lord (Hebrews 2:11). Many believers want to sanctify themselves, and thereby immediately refuse to let themselves be sanctified by Another. Whoever tries to sanctify himself will not let the Lord sanctify him. Whoever yields himself and surrenders to God will receive God’s sanctification and will then learn to live from it. Every believer has been sanctified. God sees us in Christ, and therefore He sees us as holy and righteous. Christ Jesus has been made unto us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). Christ Jesus is our Sanctifier. Of Him (God) are we in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:30). The initiative came from God. Christ has become to us divine wisdom and righteousness. Of ourselves we are not righteous and therefore have no righteousness in ourselves. Believers have received that righteousness from Christ. Believers are holy. That holiness is not in themselves, but it is in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2). The same is true of redemption. The believer cannot “build” his own sanctification. He cannot bring sanctification about himself. He receives it from God and in Christ. The believer has only to believe it!

There are people who think they must live holy lives in order to become holy. The Bible teaches, however, that the believer is holy and is therefore expected to live a holy life. This actually applies to everything the believer has received. He has received it; therefore he is it, and he is therefore expected to live accordingly.

> Ephesians 4:1
> I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;

Believers have been called, and are therefore expected to live accordingly. This can only happen when he knows and believes the things. He must first accept them—not because he experiences them, but because he believes them. It is, after all, the Word of God. Only after accepting them will/can they have an effect upon his practical walk of life. If he does not know he is holy, he will never live a holy life. The same applies to:

> Ephesians 5:5–6
> 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
> 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:7

> Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Because we are believers, we also ought not to walk in uncleanness, and we ought not to do the things that whoremongers do. There is a difference between who/what we are and the way we behave. From God's viewpoint we are children of God and therefore not sinners, whoremongers, and so on. Many children of God often behave as though they are. In that they act wrongly, because they are not sinners, whoremongers, or the like, and therefore they ought not to behave that way. They are children of God, and they ought to live from that. Believers are holy and righteous in Christ. They have not become so by their own works. Therefore they cannot become unclean, unholy, or unrighteous by their own works. They have been cleansed by grace, by God, and in Christ. If it depended on their own works, they would never have been cleansed. This is also the very reason why a born-again person can never again be lost. A born-again person is saved by the work of God's grace. There is no work of the born-again person set against it. Therefore he cannot be lost by his own works. For he is not able, by his own works, to undo the work of God. God has accomplished His work, and it is pride to think that a human being can dismantle that work.

The believer ought to be focused on what he has received in Christ. In Christ he is holy, righteous. In Christ he is a child of God. He has received eternal life in Christ. From that he ought to live. The call to a godly walk of life is not addressed to unbelievers, but to believers. They are children of God and are called to walk in accordance with their nature. That the believers have been sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ is also stated by Peter.

> 1 Peter 1:4–5
> 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,
> 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The believers themselves are kept by the power of God and through faith. Moreover, their inheritance is reserved in heaven. It is therefore naturally necessary that the believers themselves be kept, for what benefit would there be in an inheritance being reserved for them if they themselves were not kept? Both the inheritance and the heir are preserved. All who

have been born again are kept. This is essential. Believers know that a great deal is required to preserve them from all that comes against them. That is why Scripture emphatically declares that He keeps the believer. There are many hostile powers against which the believer must be preserved. God has caused believers to be born again (1 Peter 1:3), so that they might receive the promised inheritance. For us (believers in the fifth dispensation) that inheritance is not here on earth, but in heaven. The believer will receive that inheritance because he himself is also kept. The believer can never lose his new life. He did nothing to obtain that new life, and he cannot lose it again. The believer is kept. That is the starting point. The Bible does not set the believer to work; rather, it gives him rest. Yet in practice many believers have no rest, and as a result they set themselves to work (or are set to work by others). Consequently they have even less rest than before. Human works lead to nothing. Scripture teaches that believers may enter into rest (Hebrews 4:9–11). Rest means ceasing from works in order to earn something by them. “Rest” signifies “ceasing from works”. In biblical terms, “works” means “being occupied in order to earn something”, “being occupied in order to improve oneself”. “Works” therefore stands in contrast to “grace” (Romans 4:4–5). “Works” are only works when there is a reward attached. Believers do not become better by working, but only by the grace of God.

Restlessness arises in a believer when he begins striving to earn something. This is all too often emphasised in preaching. People are told they must do all sorts of things, or else they will not make it. Often this is not stated outright. When grace is rejected and people are set to work, the believer ought immediately to recognise this as an unbiblical message. It is usually not presented so bluntly. Some teach that the path of progressive sanctification can or must be wrought by the believer himself through ceasing certain things. By doing or refraining from certain activities, they seek to become “more pleasing” to God. This is impossible. The believer has already received everything God has to give. He has been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Nothing more can be added to that. The believer can, however, learn to live from it. This must be done out of love for the Lord, and not in order to improve himself, for that leads to nothing.

Another truth is that God completes His work in us. The Lord does much, and in His grace He desires to involve us in it. He does not do so in order that the believer might thereby improve himself—though he certainly does not become worse. As soon as the believer works from the notion that he will thereby become better, he is on the wrong track. He can add nothing to salvation, for that salvation is secure in Christ. Both the inheritance and the heir are kept by God Himself. As long as the believer is on earth, he ought to live from rest. This means devoting his time as much as possible to the service of Christ, who has given him that rest. He has become a servant to the Lord. This principle, incidentally, also applied under the old covenant, but there it was under the bondage of the law (Acts 15:10; Galatians 5:1–3). Under the new covenant it takes place in all goodwill (Ephesians 6:7), in liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16), and with the whole heart (Romans 6:17–18; Colossians 3:23).

It is not a matter of “must”, but of having received grace to be allowed and enabled to serve. We serve not out of compulsion, but out of love for the Lord.
It was God’s intention that Israel, after the resurrection, should serve the Lord in full liberty, delivered from the yoke of bondage (the law). God desired to write His Word on tables of flesh (2 Corinthians 3:3). Under the old covenant He wrote on tables of stone (Exodus 24:12; 34:1). The believer is expected to serve the Lord. The Lord does not demand it. If all is well, the believer will desire nothing else than to serve Him. He will desire nothing more than to present his life as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1). When he acknowledges Him as Lord, the highest fulfilment is to place his life at His service. When he has the opportunity to express his love for the Lord, he ought indeed to do so. “Loving” is never a command or order. God has given His life within the believer so that he might be in fellowship with God, and on that basis also live in fellowship with Him. The believer is in fellowship with Him. It is intended that in his practical life he should give expression to this. He does so not in order to hold on to his salvation or anything of that kind, but as the outworking of what he has already received.
The Epistle of Jude devotes much attention to the ungodly. It does not say that believers must ensure they do not sin. Nor does it say that believers must ensure they do not belong to those who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (see Jude 4 and following). This epistle warns the believer against those who do such things. The world—the unbelievers—does such things. Believers are kept from the things that come against them from that direction. Church history repeatedly shows that human reasonings (the rudiments of the world; Colossians 2:8, 20) find their way into the thinking of believers. The thinking of the world is reintroduced (and reintroduced again) into the life and thinking (and thus into the walk) of the believer. As a result, believers begin to think and live in the same way as the world. This is obviously not the intention. Jude deliberately separates the matters of believers from those of the world. On one side stands a futile world in which many forces are active. On the other side stand the believers, who live in the rest of God. It is God’s Spirit who works in them. This applies both to the fifth and to the sixth dispensation.

Jude 2
Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.
Jude expresses a heartfelt wish (in the optative mood) that mercy, peace, and love may be multiplied to the believers he addresses. This is not a command for them to achieve or produce these things themselves, but a desire that they may increasingly experience and live from them.

- Mercy is used here as a synonym for grace.
- These three—mercy (grace), peace, and love—are to grow and increase in the life of the believer.
- They do not grow in themselves (for God does not change or develop), but they are multiplied to the believer: they gain greater influence, deeper understanding, and a larger place in his thinking, faith, and daily walk.

- As the believer learns more fully to appropriate and live from God's grace, love, and peace, they become greater in his experience. The blessings themselves remain the same (perfect and complete in Christ), but the believer's perception and enjoyment of them grows.

This growth is not about intellectual accumulation or self-improvement through effort. It concerns faith increasing (compare 2 Corinthians 10:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:3) and knowledge deepening (compare Colossians 1:10; 2 Peter 3:18). The believer grows as spiritual realities take a larger place in his life and become more real to him through believing.

The same principle applies to the spiritual blessings listed in Ephesians 1:3–14: believers are already blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. These blessings do not increase in number or quality—they are complete. Yet the believer can grow in understanding them, so that they play a greater role in his thinking, faith, and practical life.

Wherever Scripture speaks of "growth," it refers to growth in faith and knowledge of the things freely given by God. The fruit of this growth is seen in the fruit of the Spirit

> Galatians 5:22:
> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

This fruit is singular—it is the one result of the Spirit's working. It is not primarily intellectual knowledge of the Bible, but love, joy, peace, and so on, springing from living faith. If a believer has much head knowledge of Scripture but lacks love, joy, and peace, he is merely puffed up. The Word of God must be allowed to work life within him, not merely be stored as information.

Believers are saved entirely by grace and do not need to work to become holy, righteous, or loving. They are holy and righteous in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). From that position they are called to live accordingly (Ephesians 4:1). The call to a godly life is addressed to those who are already children of God—not to unbelievers. The believer is expected to walk worthy of his calling because he already is what God has made him in Christ.

The Epistle of Jude repeatedly emphasises the difference between the life and thinking of the believer and that of the unbelieving world. The believer is kept by God, preserved in Christ, and called to live from the rest and grace he has received—not from self-effort or striving. Mercy, peace, and love are multiplied to him as he learns to rest in and live from what God has already given.

Jude 3

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Jude originally planned to write about the common salvation (the salvation shared across all Scripture), but found it necessary instead to urge believers to earnestly contend for the faith.

Key Points:

- Contending for the faith is an essential part of the common salvation.
- The believer, having received salvation by faith, must expect and engage in conflict to preserve and continue living out that faith.
- This is a practical, ongoing struggle—not theoretical—to keep living by faith rather than by sight, works, or human effort.
- Paul describes the same reality: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Nature of the Conflict:

- Faith trusts in unseen, eternal realities (Hebrews 11:1; Romans 10:17), while man naturally lives by what is visible (1 Samuel 16:7).
- The believer’s conflict arises because everything around him—visible things, human philosophies, other people—pushes him toward trusting in the seen and temporal rather than the unseen and eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).
- Preaching to believers aims to set the unseen, eternal things before them so they may live by them.

Faith vs. Works:

- “Faith” stands in direct opposition to “works” (Romans 4:5).
- Faith and grace belong together; works and law belong together (Romans 11:6).
- Failing to live by faith is the same as “failing of the grace of God” .
- The believer is saved by grace and must continue to live by grace. Grace flows continually (John 1:16), with “exceeding grace” and “exceeding riches of his grace” (2 Corinthians 9:14; Ephesians 2:7; 4:15; 9:8).

Practical Implications:

- The struggle to come to faith continues as the struggle to remain living by faith.
- When the believer ceases to live by faith, he replaces grace with works, falls short of grace, and exalts himself (pride).
- This is the root of pride both in unbelievers who refuse faith and in believers who refuse to continue living by grace.
- Human wisdom and the rudiments of the world teach self-improvement and works; Scripture teaches dependence on God’s grace.
- The serpent’s lie to Eve was precisely this: self-improvement (“you shall be as gods”). Satan continually distorts God’s Word to replace grace with works.

The Faith Once Delivered:

- The faith was once delivered to the saints—complete, final, and unchanging.
- It was delivered once for all after Christ’s resurrection to the apostles/saints.
- Since then, God has been silent; no new faith is being delivered.

- Believers are called to hold fast to this once-delivered faith, abide by it, and live from it.
- The Epistle of Jude urges believers to recognise and resist anything that would draw them away from this faith.

Because Jude takes pains (diligence) to write about the common salvation, he also finds it necessary to write that they should contend for the faith. Because Jude writes about the common salvation, he must also write about the fight of faith. “Contending for the faith” forms part of the common salvation. The common salvation includes that the believer who has obtained a share in it should contend for the faith. It means that as a believer he must expect conflict. He ought not to avoid that conflict. That conflict will come upon him. The believer’s conflict is the struggle to preserve the faith. That struggle is not theoretical, but very practical. It therefore also concerns practical living from faith. The believer’s conflict consists in continuing to live from faith. The believer has become saved by faith. He ought then to continue living by faith. Paul calls this “having fought the good fight”.

> 2 Timothy 4:7
> I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;

“Faith” indicates that the believer trusts in things he does not see (Hebrews 11:1). He believes in things he has heard (Romans 10:17). Because he does not see them, he finds it difficult to hold them as true and to regard them as really present in his life. Man normally lives from what is before his eyes (1 Samuel 16:7). The things of faith are not seen, and therefore it is difficult to live from them nonetheless. The preaching to believers has only one aim: to set before them from the Word of God the things that are not seen. They are proclaimed so that the unseen things may be regarded by the believers (2 Corinthians 4:18). Those things are eternal. The things that are seen are temporal and therefore worthless. Living from faith always involves conflict, because a believer is inclined to live from the things he sees. He ought not to do so. Even if he himself has learned to live from faith, he still has conflict. This arises because he constantly comes into contact with people (believers and unbelievers) who again set the visible things before him. Faith is not merely “believing in unseen things”. “Faith” moreover stands in place of “works” (Romans 4:5). In Scripture “faith” and “works” stand in opposition to one another. The opposite of “works” is “grace” (Romans 11:6). Both “faith” and “grace” stand in contrast to “works”. “Faith” and “grace” always go together, for one believes precisely in grace. “Living from faith” is the same as “living from grace”.

If the believer does not fight the good fight of faith, or if he loses that fight, it is the same as “failing of the grace of God” (Hebrews 12:15). Whoever “fails” falls behind. Whoever does not fail of the grace is the one who has not only been saved by grace but also lives from grace. He walks by faith. He believes in what God has accomplished (the works of God) and he lives from the grace of God. A believer who does not live from faith, or who threatens to cease doing so, puts (his own) works in its place.

By that he falls short of grace. Therefore a good, biblical message is always one of grace. Of course there are certain laws and rules. He knows that by nature. But that there is grace he does not know by nature, and therefore it must be preached. The struggle of a person to come to faith continues in the life of that person who has come to faith. He always has the struggle to continue living from that faith. Believers are saved by grace. As soon as they have come to faith by grace, they very quickly begin imposing laws upon one another. Scripture teaches that one is saved by the Spirit (compare John 3:5–6; 6:63) and by grace (Ephesians 2:5, 8). One ought then to continue/remain in that same Spirit/grace. From that one must (learn to) live (Galatians 5:25).

The believer has been saved by grace. Yet he continues to sin, because the flesh can do nothing else but sin (Romans 7:18, 25). Therefore he needs grace daily in order to live from it. Some believers do not want this, because they find it humiliating. Therefore they replace grace with “works”. Yet they fall short of grace, and Scripture is adapted (and thus distorted) to their own thinking. They place themselves on a pedestal. The Bible teaches that man by nature is a sinner (Romans 5:12). Man can be saved only by grace and ought thereafter to learn to live by grace. Therefore believers receive grace upon grace (John 1:16). The first grace is received to be saved. The second to live saved. Scripture speaks not only of grace, but even of “the exceeding grace of God” (2 Corinthians 9:14) and “the exceeding riches of his grace” (Ephesians 2:7). The Lord is exceedingly abundant in His grace (2 Corinthians 4:15; 9:8). Grace is not given once for all; it is a fountain that continues to flow. The believer continually needs that grace.

The believer fights the good fight of faith. He ought to continue believing. Another word for “believing” is “trusting”. He ought to continue trusting in what God has spoken. From that he ought then to (learn to) live. It involves conflict, because everything in the believer’s life seeks to push him in the other direction. Every human philosophy, teaching, or wisdom starts from the premise that man must do something to become better. The Bible starts from the premise that man is capable of nothing and must therefore place himself in dependence upon the One who does the things for him. The Lord once explained this by means of the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37).

There was a certain man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he fell into the hands of robbers, and they left him half dead by the roadside. What must he do to be saved? Nothing! When someone asks what he must do to be saved, he is in fact displaying pride. He cannot accomplish his own salvation. The only thing he can do is surrender himself to his Neighbour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He must yield himself to his Neighbour who comes along. He ought to surrender to the one true Samaritan—Jesus the Lord.

For all have died, because Christ died for all (2 Corinthians 5:15)

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:15). The

death of the Lord Jesus was for all. Only those who believe in Him share in His life. The life of the risen Lord is not given to all, but only to those who believe. By faith one does not obtain a share in His death, but in His life! This is the glad tidings. It is preached to dead people. They have no right to existence. Man is dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). This is especially true since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The world is dead. Believers live in a dead world. The glad tidings are that everyone who believes in Him whom God raised from the dead truly receives life in Him. If one believes in the One who was crucified, one at best shares only in His crucifixion. Many people were present at His crucifixion. They believed He was crucified. Yet they did not receive eternal life thereby. Eternal life is received only on the basis of faith in the risen Christ.

Man is saved and receives eternal life on the basis of faith. He must place his trust in the One who has had mercy on him and still has mercy on him. Christ shows us mercy. The believer ought to submit himself to the only Sovereign whom he acknowledges (Jude 4), the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer has received everything from his heavenly Father. What he has become, he has become in Christ Jesus. Everything he needs he receives —and more besides (Romans 8:31–32). Everything he does, he does for the Lord (Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:23). He is complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10).

Many believers came to faith at a moment when they were in deep distress and “could no longer see a way forward”. They were at their wits’ end, with no hope for the future. In such a situation people often come to faith. Most believers forget fairly quickly that they came to the Lord in precisely such circumstances. They were in the greatest trouble, came to faith, and then learned to live by faith and by grace. Yet the intention is that they should continue living from it—even when the problems have been resolved. It makes no difference how long someone has been a child of God. By nature he remains a sinful, corrupt human being. Paul said of himself:

> Romans 7:24
>
> O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

This verse is in the present tense, even though Paul was by that time already a child of God for many years and even an apostle. The believer always remains that wretched man. Insofar as there is anything else (and of course he believes that!), it is solely by the grace of God. He believes this and ought to continue believing it. This preserves him from improper pride and keeps him submitted to the Lord. The only thing that can go wrong with a child of God is that in his practical walk of life he no longer lives by faith and grace. Then he falls short of grace and exalts himself. He no longer sees himself as someone who needs grace. In the end it always proves to be one thing: pride. This applies to the person who refuses to come to faith, but it applies equally to the believer who refuses to live by grace. The rudiments of the world teach that man is capable of standing on his own two feet and improving himself. This was the principle the serpent preached to the first man, causing him to fall away from God. The

serpent essentially said: “Eat plenty from that tree, and you will become as God.” He preached in effect that man should improve himself. Satan believes in the existence of God, but he occupies himself with distorting the words of God so as to teach the opposite.

God’s message was that man should eat from the tree of life, so that he might receive life from the true Tree of Life—namely Christ. The serpent distorted that message and called man to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That brings no knowledge of the Lord and of His Word. It brings only knowledge of good and evil (this is permitted, that is not). One can even do this by means of Scripture, but it only makes one “dropsical”. If the believer does not cling to grace, he falls prey to the thinking of the world. The believer will always encounter contradictors (compare Hebrews 12:3; Jude 15–16). They do not say, “God has not spoken,” but rather, “God has spoken, but He means something different from what He said.” The believer has only one foothold: the Word of God. Clinging to it is his trial and his conflict.

For a believer there ought to be nothing more delightful than reading and studying the Word of God. When he does so, he also takes upon himself an enormous responsibility. It is not a hobby, not a pleasant way to pass the time. If all is well, he does it out of love for the Lord. The believer ought in all circumstances to submit himself to that Word. The days when a believer is “under pressure” or believes himself to be tempted are generally not the best days to occupy himself with the Word of God. They are, however, the best days to be comforted by the Word of God. If the believer must still study the Word of God at that moment, it is in fact too late. When under pressure, he does not see things as they are. The believer ought to study the Word of God when he is not under pressure. Then he is free and can open the Word with all boldness, so that he may come to the knowledge of it. That knowledge of the Word is his support in the days when he truly needs a foothold. He can then fall back on things that (hopefully for many years) have been undisputedly established.

The Bible was not given so that the believer might find help in conflicts or problems. The Bible is the revealed Word of God, which the believer—out of love for God—ought to take to himself so that he may be armed for the times when temptation comes (compare Ephesians 6:10–18). The Lord Himself is the outstanding example of this. Right up to the beginning of His public ministry He immersed Himself in the things of His Father. At the age of twelve He was already occupied with them (Luke 2:42–49). The Bible gives no reason to suppose that this changed in the years that followed. The Lord was continually occupied with studying the Scriptures. His public ministry began with the temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4:1–13). When the devil came, He knew the Word and said, “It is written.” At the moment temptations come, the believer must know what is written. If he does not know it at that moment, he is in fact too late and falls into “the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). In difficult times he must be grounded on the Word of God (having put on the armour of God) so that he may stand. Therefore Scripture says in:

Ecclesiastes 12:1

> Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

It is best to turn to the Lord and His Word while still young. Whoever does so only later must as quickly as possible “make up for lost time”. Listening (and reading) is the only way to take in the Word of God and learn to understand it. It is also necessary in order to know God. Never build your faith on the one who speaks, but only on what Scripture says. When you stand before the Lord you cannot say, “So-and-so said this, and I have lived by it.” You must live from what the Word of God says. If a brother sets before you things you do not read in the Word of God, you must not begin to believe them. No brother is ever the standard—only the Word of God. It may happen that you have not understood certain things correctly. What matters is whether you have dealt with the Word of God honourably and in good conscience, whether you have lived in all submission to that Word, and applied that Word to your own personal life. The believer ought to seek the Truth. This happens all too seldom (unfortunately), and therefore the Truth is all too seldom found. The believer’s conflict is to live in submission to the Word of God. He lets the contradictors be what they are. He stands firm. Ephesians 6:10 says:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Paul had already mentioned this power in Ephesians 1:19. It is the power with which God raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:20). That power also works in believers. That power is the power of the armour (Ephesians 6:11–18). Whoever puts on the armour has no strength in himself. He becomes stronger the more he wears the armour. The shield of faith is “Thou, O God, my Lord”. The armour is the Lord Himself. The believer is clothed with His strength and needs that armour in order to live by faith. The adversary wants the believer not to live by faith. The adversary is the devil (Ephesians 6:11). The Hebrew name for this figure is “satan”, which means “adversary”. The Greek name is “devil” (diabolos), which indicates that he throws everything into confusion (and thus confuses or interchanges things).

There are only two possibilities: either one eats from the tree of life (on the right), or one eats from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (on the left). When the devil throws things into confusion, they are interchanged. The result is that one no longer eats from the tree of life, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan does not want people to live by faith. Therefore he teaches that believers must work. His teaching is based on the idea that one does not live by grace but works. The attacks of Satan are aimed at drawing the believer away from grace and living by faith, and then causing him to live under (the works of) the law. The believer does not wrestle against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12). Against flesh and blood he might perhaps easily gain the victory. The conflict, however, is intangible, because it is directed not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers. That is why people (often including believers) find it so difficult to surrender to the Word of God. It is not about a person or a brother or sister, but about the adversary behind them (compare Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33). When it concerns differences

one finds in the Bible, there is far more behind it. That makes conversation so difficult and causes it to become ever more complicated. In fact it never comes to an end, because someone is behind it who confuses everything. He is the adversary of the One who has placed everything neatly and in order in His Word. God has set everything in order in Christ. From His Word and from His creation He shows this. Satan—the adversary—benefits from turning His ordered things (kosmos) into chaos.

The conflict is not against flesh and blood. This also means that the believer ought not to fight against “the old man”. In practice this means he ought not to reckon with the old man (let the old man be without fruit). He knows that—reckoned according to the old man—he is a sinner. Yet he reckons that he is a child of God and in Christ a new creation (and thus complete) (2 Corinthians 5:17). He himself is not righteous, but Christ is his righteousness. Christ is his sanctification and wisdom, and from that he lives. Because of the conflict, the believer ought to take up the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:13) so that he may withstand. That armour is not his own. It is the armour of God. Perhaps he thinks he has an armour of his own, but in the spiritual conflict he has no use for his own armour. With the armour of God he can withstand, but with his own armour it is impossible. With that armour he only has trouble (compare 1 Samuel 17:38–39).

Saul (broadly speaking) is a picture of Israel under the law. “Saul” means “chosen” or “selected”, and Israel was the chosen people. David is a picture of the next generation, living under grace. David had no need of Saul’s armour. Armed with the law one never gains victory over the adversary. Moreover, David did not overcome in the form (the armour) of Saul, but in the form of the Beloved.

Whoever has on the armour of God will stand. “Here I stand, I can do no other,” said Luther. He is known as someone with whom one could not argue, and for that reason people considered him narrow-minded and bigoted. Yet he had learned that man is justified only by faith, because he had listened to the Word of God. There was no arguing with him. The Word of God said/says it thus, and therefore it was/is so. There is no other choice. “Standing” appears, among other places, in:

> Galatians 5:1
> Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

The believer has been called to liberty and is bound to no man, but he is bound to the living Christ and thus to the Word of Christ.

> Romans 5:2
> By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The believer stands in grace. This is in fact the same as “standing in liberty”. This involves conflict, because all people (and often believers too) are intent on placing believers under laws and rules. The attacks of the adversary are always aimed at replacing liberty and grace with rules and laws (visible things). The believer’s only concern is to remain free, so that he may serve the Lord in accordance with the gifts the Lord has given him. Everything else comes from the adversary, and to that he ought to resist.

The believer has been called to liberty, but he ought not to use that liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Galatians 5:13). There are believers who say, “I am free, so I may/can do and leave undone whatever I please.” This, however, is a wrong conclusion. These are human thoughts applied to divine truths. Believers are indeed free, but the intention is not that they should then live according to their sinful thinking. Believers have been set free so that they may serve the Lord.
There are some who say, “That teaching is dangerous.” In the first place, that teaching is not mine, but God’s. He has communicated it in His Word, and therefore it is the Truth. In the second place, it is not a dangerous teaching, but a biblical one. We may find the Truth dangerous, but we must learn to live with it. Whoever misuses that Truth will have to answer to the Lord for it. Paul speaks in the epistle to the Galatians about people who use liberty as an excuse for their own ungodly manner of life. In Jude 4 Jude essentially says the same thing. There are people who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness. It does not say that the teaching of the grace of God must be changed. The believer lives from that grace, although there are people who abuse it. Jude here speaks of people in the world (unbelievers). The teaching of the grace of God and of the reign of grace does not apply only to believers. That teaching applies to the only Sovereign who exists. He reigns from grace and is seated at the right hand of God. This means that grace reigns not only in the life of a believer, but also in the world and among the nations (in the life of unbelievers). In our days the same sins are committed as were committed in Sodom and Gomorrha in former times, yet God does not intervene. God will bring judgement upon those sins, but not now. He does not bring judgement now, because everyone lives under the reign of grace. Peter says in:

> 2 Peter 3:9
> The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God does not judge now. The world thinks there is no God, because He does nothing. God is a gracious God, and this comes out very strongly in our present dispensation. Sinful man abuses His grace. They use grace as an excuse for lasciviousness. This does nothing to alter the teaching of grace. It only highlights the sinfulness of natural man, who abuses the grace of God by sinning all the more against Him. Believers ought to draw their teaching from this. They learn from the Bible that judgement is coming in the future. They ought also to learn to live from the grace that God has given and continues to give, and to serve God. They do so because the love of God constrains them.
When a certain teaching comes to the believer which he cannot verify in any way, there are two possibilities. The first is that he lets that teaching lie. The second is to ask the question: “Is the Lord glorified by this teaching, or is it for the glorification of man?” Any teaching in which man (or even the believer) is glorified is unbiblical! There is only One who can receive honour and glory: the only Sovereign, the only wise God (Jude 25). Of course, we ought to accept something only when we are convinced from the Word of God. That faith was once delivered to the saints. The

little word “once” could be omitted; no one would miss it. Yet it stands there. “Once” indicates that it happened once for all and never again. It is therefore not a description of something that continues to happen up to the present day. The faith is no longer being delivered to the saints now. After the resurrection, the Lord delivered this faith and the truths concerning grace and its dominion to the saints (the disciples/apostles). It was given to them, and since then God has been silent. He delivered it once for all to the saints. The intention is that people should abide by it. The things that were delivered at that time ought to be held fast. We find this same principle with Paul. He received things from the Lord and delivered them to others (1 Corinthians 11:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:1). It was given to Paul once for all. Paul then proclaimed it. For example, he passed it on to Timothy, who in turn passed it on further. It was delivered to the saints (believers). Mankind ought then to listen to these saints. There are people who read as though “once” is not there. They read: “… the faith which was delivered to the saints.” Then they fill in “saints” as all believers today. Believers must be faithful to this in order to prevent certain people creeping in among them. In this line of reasoning, those “certain people” are not unbelievers, but “unbelieving believers”. This reasoning is incorrect. The little word “once” stands in the original text. The things were delivered once for all to the saints. The truths delivered to them remain standing. What was delivered to them was that the kingdom would not be revealed for the time being. When the kingdom is revealed, it will be accompanied by judgement upon mankind living at that time.

Jude 4
For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Key Characteristics of These “Certain Men”:

- They crept in unawares (secretly, stealthily, unnoticed at first).
  This is the same principle as the woman hiding leaven in three measures of meal (Matthew 13:33; symbolising Babylon, Revelation 17:5). The mystery of lawlessness is already at work (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, 8), and this secret infiltration has been happening since Christ’s resurrection.
- They were before of old ordained to this condemnation.
  Their judgement is certain and foreordained (Jude 15). This refers to a future judgement on living mankind at Christ’s appearing—not the final judgement of all the dead (Revelation 20:11–15), but the judgement of the living at the end of the coming 40-year period.
- They are ungodly men.
  The emphasis is not on their actions but on their nature: they are unregenerate, natural men without the Spirit (Jude 19). They are not believers living according to the old nature; they are unbelievers who do not belong among the saints.

- They turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness.
  God’s grace has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11). The whole world now lives under the reign of grace because judgement is withheld after Christ’s death and resurrection. Instead of using this grace to repent and serve God, these men abuse it as an excuse for licentious, sinful living. They reason: “Since no judgement comes, we can do as we please.”
- They deny the only Sovereign and our Lord Jesus Christ.
  By abusing grace, they reject Christ’s lordship. They refuse to acknowledge Him as the only Sovereign who reigns from the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). This denial is practical: they live as though God does nothing and has no authority over them.

Comparison with 2 Peter 2:1In 2 Peter 2:1
But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction;
Peter speaks of false teachers who are believers (“the Lord that bought them”) yet secretly bring in destructive heresies and live ungodly lives. Their works will be burned, but they themselves will be saved (1 Corinthians 3:15).
Jude speaks of ungodly unbelievers who were never bought.
Both groups creep in secretly and deny the Lord’s authority, but the outcome differs: Peter’s group faces loss of reward; Jude’s group faces condemnation.Broader Context

- These men represent everything that seeks world dominion apart from God and Christ—Babylon in essence.
- The conflict between Christ’s hidden kingdom and Satan’s hidden kingdom is real but not yet openly visible.
- After the rapture of the Church, this secret working will be revealed, and the Lord will consume the lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2).
- Jude warns believers so they recognise these men, protect the faith, and remain separate from the world’s thinking and abuse of grace.

(Note: better manuscripts read: “and denying the only Sovereign and [namely] our Lord Jesus Christ.”)
“Certain men” are ungodly. Much more is said about them in this epistle. They were ordained beforehand to this condemnation. This judgement is mentioned in:
Jude 15
To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.
This epistle announces a future judgement. Even for those living in the present (fifth) dispensation, this epistle is instructive. Believers learn that although it does not come now, judgement will certainly come. “Certain men” have crept in unawares. This means it happens secretly. In Matthew 13:33 we read that a woman (Babylon; Revelation 17:5) hid leaven in

three measures of meal. These things are already taking place now, for the mystery of lawlessness is already at work (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, 8). In the next dispensation, Babylon will reach its climax. When Christ received His kingdom and hid it, the kingdom of the evil one was hidden at the same time. The kingdom of Christ is hidden, and so is the kingdom of the adversary. The conflict between God and Satan is not directly perceptible in the world. From the light of Scripture, things can be recognised, but whoever does not handle Scripture sees nothing of that conflict.

Christ works in secret, and Satan also works in secret. This makes it no less real or less dangerous. The workings are present, but they will only be revealed in the future. After the rapture of the Church, it will be revealed, and the Lord will consume the lawless one with the breath of His mouth (2 Thessalonians 2). Everything Satan does can be described by the concept of “Babylon”. “Babylon” refers to everything that attempts to establish world dominion—yet apart from God and Christ. Whatever happens apart from Christ is by definition antichristian. Certain people have crept in secretly. This has been happening ever since the resurrection of Christ. The adversary always comes to us through people. He can even come through believers. Yet it is never said that Satan comes. It is never stated that these people are representatives of Satan. He comes secretly, and that is precisely what makes it so difficult. There are people who are not children of God, yet they use the same terms as we do. In practice they are after material gain. They use the Bible as packaging for unbiblical things. Sometimes it takes a long time before the believer realises that although such people use the same expressions, they are in fact speaking about entirely different things. Believers are often so naïve as to think that when someone uses certain terms, they mean the same as the Bible means. This is partly because the Bible is used to smuggle in unbiblical ideas. They are wolves in sheep’s clothing. They look like lambs, but they speak as the dragon (Satan; compare Revelation 13:11). In Jude 4 it concerns “certain men” who will come under judgement. In 2 Peter 2:1 it concerns false prophets and false teachers who were bought by the Lord:

> 2 Peter 2:1
> But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction;

They deny the Lord who bought them. In Jude 4 this is not mentioned, because those ungodly men were not bought by the Lord. From this difference it is clear that 2 Peter 2 speaks about believers, and Jude about unbelievers. The believers in 2 Peter 2 live according to the old man and bring in destructive heresies. Yet they are believers. The similarity between the two passages is that there is “creeping in”. Peter calls it “privily bringing in damnable heresies”, while Jude says that certain men have crept in unawares. Jude speaks of unbelieving people who creep in. Peter states that the heresies have been brought in secretly. The false prophets and false teachers who bring in these heresies secretly are believers and form part of the Church. The heresies are obviously out of

place. The people who according to Jude 4 have crept in are not in the right place, for they are unbelievers and do not belong within the Church. Peter also speaks of this in his first epistle:

> 1 Peter 2:6–8
> 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.
> 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
> 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Of the disobedient it is said: “The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.” This applies to “them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.” They were not appointed to stumble at the word. They were appointed to judgement. They are disobedient/unbelieving. This is first of all a description of Israel living under the law. They stumbled over the Stone, Christ, and therefore the Stone fell upon them (Luke 20:17).

There are only two possibilities: either one builds on the Stone (believes in the Stone: Christ), or one stumbles over the Stone. The Word of God is either a ministry of death (for those who do not believe; 2 Corinthians 3:7) or a ministry of the Spirit in glory (for those who do believe; 2 Corinthians 3:8). Whoever does not believe in the Stone will stumble over Him. Over the believers in 2 Peter 2 comes swift destruction. When someone has done his own works, those will be burned up, which is a form of judgement. His works will go into the fire, but he himself will be saved (1 Corinthians 3:13–15). The false prophets and teachers in 2 Peter 2 are saved, but the “certain men” in Jude 4 are not. There is much similarity between the two groups, yet this is a significant difference. This is why both passages are in the Bible. Large parts are the same, yet there are still great differences. The one passage (the Epistle of Jude) speaks about natural man in general, the ungodly. The other passage (the second epistle of Peter) speaks about born-again people who live ungodly lives. The most important difference is that the first group is not saved, while the second group is.Both in the past and now, false teachings are preached. They are destructive heresies that are brought in secretly. It happens under cover. It almost never happens that someone deliberately sets out to introduce unbiblical things, as if to say, “Let me try to introduce a heresy about the Bible and see if I succeed.” False teachings are generally introduced secretly, using “good” arguments. The result is always unbiblical! Jude and Peter warn against this. The believer ought always (in all circumstances) to adjust his opinions to Scripture. In practice he ought also to adjust the way he expresses his opinions to Scripture. He ought to use biblical expressions as much as possible in the sense that Scripture gives them. He must always remain within the framework that Scripture sets. He ought daily to examine “whether those things are so”

(Acts 17:11). The things written in the Epistle of Jude become highly relevant in the time after the rapture of the Church, because the time until the moment of judgement will then be measured. So it was also in the days before the flood. Then God appointed a period of 120 years. In the future there is again a fixed period. It is a period of forty years (of 360 days each), reckoned from the rapture of the Church. At the end of those forty years comes the judgement upon mankind living at that time (Matthew 25:31–46). Then the King (!) will sit upon the throne of His glory and judge. The substance of the Epistle of Jude is in fact: The judgement is coming nonetheless. This does not refer to the judgement on the last day (Revelation 20:11–15), but to a judgement upon living mankind. God has appointed man—the Son of Man—to rule over the earth. This applies to the old, present earth. There will come a time when this earth and everything in it will be subjected to Christ. This old earth is transitory and will come under judgement, but there will come a new earth (and new heavens).

Before this earth disappears, the earth will be subjected to Christ, and He will have dominion over it (for at least a thousand years). Scripture teaches that Christ will reign eternally and has an incorruptible throne. In that case it is not about a thousand years, but an eternal kingdom on the new creation. Jude does not speak of a judgement upon all people who have ever lived, for that is the judgement on the last day. It concerns a judgement upon living mankind. The mankind living at the time of Christ's appearing will be judged by Him. This judgement is spoken of in:

> Matthew 24:37–42
> 37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
> 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,
> 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
> 40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
> 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
> 42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

In the days of Noah, mankind thought no judgement would come. Yet it did come. In the days of the Son of Man, people also think no judgement will come, but it will come. God has appointed the time for it, and the judgement will come. It is understandable that this judgement is announced in this epistle. After this epistle follows only the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation speaks of the manner in which the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be revealed in and to the world. It describes how the nations will come under judgement and be subjected to Christ. The judgement comes upon unbelievers. In Jude 3 Jude wrote about the common salvation. He wrote this so that believers would contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. This means they are called to (continue to) believe. Jude 4 begins with "For". It then speaks about

people who do not believe. These unbelievers come under judgement. Jude therefore makes a division. Verse 3 concerns believers. They contend for the faith. On the other hand, Jude speaks of unbelievers (verse 4). There are only two possibilities: either faith and thus living by faith (with all that belongs to it), or unbelief and thus living by unbelief (with all that belongs to it). In this world both categories exist. The general thrust of the epistle is that man ought to live by faith. This means becoming a believer with all the consequences thereof, so that he does not come under judgement.

In the fifth dispensation the chance of coming under that judgement is very small. In our days that chance is of course great, but over the past 1900 years it was not present. This changes nothing about the truth that there will be a judgement upon living mankind. When someone dies and thus does not come under that judgement, he comes under the judgement on the last day. The judgement is depicted in the parable of Matthew 13:24–30. The tares (the children of the wicked one; Matthew 13:38) are not immediately removed. This happens only at the harvest (the end of the age; Matthew 13:39). Jude also speaks of this judgement. This judgement takes place at the end of the next (sixth) dispensation—at the end of the forty years. Then order will be established on earth, and the unbelievers will be taken away from the earth. The believers will enter the kingdom. Jude 4 speaks of ungodly men. It does not say that they live as ungodly or act ungodly. They do, but that is not stated here! The ungodly do indeed commit ungodly deeds ungodly (Jude 15). On that basis they will be judged. In Jude 4 it is not about what they do, but about what they are. Ungodly men are not born again. A born-again person can live ungodly, but he is not ungodly. In Jude 4 “the grace of our God” is mentioned. Some have concluded from this that it must therefore concern believers. This is incorrect, for the saving grace of God has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11). That grace of God teaches only believers (Titus 2:12).

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “The world” is simply the world, unless otherwise stated. A word always has its broadest meaning unless that meaning is narrowed by the context. God gave His Son because He loved the world. Yet not everyone receives eternal life. That is only for those who believe (come to faith).

God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world (John 3:17). That was not the purpose, yet He did! The Son died on the cross, and thereby the world was crucified (judged). God sent His Son so that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). Here “the world” cannot be filled in as the Church, for then it would be nonsense. “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). What this condemnation involves is stated immediately afterwards: though the Light has come into the world, men loved darkness rather than light. The world now lives in darkness because it has rejected the Light. Those “certain men” are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. Grace reigns until the

kingdom is revealed. Now grace prevails. In the future the reign and righteousness of the King will be added. Until the righteousness and reign of that King are revealed, there is grace. As long as that continues, there is no judgement from God. Because God's judgement is delayed, people can turn grace into lasciviousness. They reason: "If no judgement comes, we can do whatever we like." Mankind reasons this way because for some two thousand years no judgement from God has come upon the world (compare 2 Peter 3:3–7). They abuse the liberty that God gives on the basis of His grace. These people turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. Thereby they deny the only Sovereign—God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not acknowledge Him. If they acknowledged Him, they would acknowledge Him as the Sovereign who sits upon the throne of grace. Whoever acknowledges Him will not abuse His grace. Whoever does not acknowledge God ("He does nothing, after all!") uses His grace for lasciviousness. The consequence is that they will eventually (in the future) come under judgement. When people think God is dead, they go their own way. Whoever knows that God exists and is longsuffering is fully aware of God. Such a person does not abuse the grace God gives. On the outside the difference is not apparent. This is evident, for example, in the parable of:

> Matthew 13:24–30
> 24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:
> 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.
> 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.
> 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?
> 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?
> 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.
> 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

There is good seed and there are tares. On the outside, however, no difference is discernible. God lets both grow until the harvest. Then the tares will be gathered and burned. There is a difference, but that difference lies in the heart. That heart consists of faith and the hope that believers look forward to. The world does not know God and lives recklessly. The believer knows God and lives from grace. From the beginning of the Old Testament it is stated that a person's salvation depends on his own choice. In other words: does he choose that salvation or not (Deuteronomy 30:19—choose life; Joshua 24:15—choose you this day whom ye will serve). The saving grace of God has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11). One must oneself accept that grace. Salvation is offered in

Christ. Therefore it is stated concerning the believers of the Church that they are chosen in Him (Ephesians 1:4). Many omit this “in Him”. Moreover, Ephesians 1:3 states that we are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”. Christ is chosen. Whoever is in Him shares in His election. How does one come “in Him” (how is one united with Him)? That happens by believing in Him! Whatever blessing the Bible mentions, they are all applied to Christ. This applies, for example, to the blessings God made to Abraham and to his seed. These blessings apply to the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). All others to whom it was said receive a share in them only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 5

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

Salvation

Israel was delivered out of Egypt. The purpose was not merely liberation from Egypt. The people thought it was, and that is why they wanted to return to Egypt. Today people say, “We must go back to the cross of Golgotha.” That is exactly the same as “returning to Egypt,” for the Lord was crucified in (a spiritual) Egypt (Revelation 11:8)

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

We must not go back to Egypt, to the cross, or to the law (Galatians 4:4–5)

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

We have been delivered from those things. We must go forward—to Canaan! The same story is told in Hebrews 3. At the exodus from Egypt, deliverance was accomplished. Yet the majority of the people who were delivered out of Egypt perished in the wilderness. This history is often used to illustrate an unbiblical teaching which claims that a person, after being saved, can still be lost. Such teaching brings people into bondage. It may be true that one can be delivered from Egypt, but that does not necessarily mean one will arrive in Canaan, so the thinking goes. The idea that one can be delivered from Egypt yet not necessarily reach Canaan is biblical. One must, however, ask in what context this stands. The Bible teaches that the world in which we live has already been delivered. That is why there is good news. There is redemption in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24)

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

We are on our way to Canaan—that is, to a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

The first part of the story is that this world came under the power of sin and death and must be delivered from it. This part of the story has already taken place—for example, through the reconciling work of the Lord Jesus

Christ. Through that, death has been overcome. The old creation has been judged. This happened at the cross of Golgotha, where the Lamb of God took away the sin of the world (John 1:29)
The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.
Since then the whole of mankind is dead (Ephesians 2:1)
And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
Deliverance has been accomplished. On that occasion mankind was led “out of Egypt.” Yet that was not the purpose! The world has been judged and victory over death has been won. It is, however, intended that use should be made of it. It is intended that the world and mankind should be on the way to Canaan, the new creation. For that, what is needed is not God’s deliverance, but faith! One must follow the Lord and allow oneself to be led to Canaan.
Jude describes a world and a mankind that are dead. Many say this cannot be, because the Bible supposedly does not speak about unbelievers. The Bible is written to believers, but that does not mean the Bible always speaks about believers. Jude writes about unbelievers. It concerns natural men who do not have the Spirit (Jude 18–19). This epistle is not written to them, but it is written about them. It concerns people who have not been born again. Jude speaks about natural man who has obtained a share in “the exodus from Egypt” yet has not therefore arrived in Canaan. For that, faith is necessary. Through the death and resurrection, the world has been freed from the power of sin and from the bondage of the law (Egypt). Since then, mankind as a whole can be compared to Israel in the wilderness. There is a lack of life, and one can live there only from the grace of God. This applies not only to the born-again person but also to the unregenerate person. Through the death of the Lord Jesus, mankind has lost its right to existence. Whatever one subsequently receives in the world can only proceed from the grace of God. That is why the present (fifth) dispensation is called “the dispensation of the grace of God” (Ephesians 3:2). This applies to every person—both to believers and to unbelievers.
God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9:
The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
The world now lives in the grace of God. That world has a share in the exodus from Egypt, but that does not mean the world is saved. One has been delivered from the old, but one often makes no use of the opportunity to receive new life. One refuses to place one’s faith in the One who led out. Deliverance has been accomplished. The world is delivered and is now in the wilderness. Through that wilderness the way leads to Canaan, the promised land. Only those who believe arrive in Canaan. The preaching is directed so that the sinner may come to faith. He has been delivered from Egypt and lives in the wilderness. He usually strives to go back to Egypt, but that is the wrong direction. The whole creation has meanwhile been set free—especially the whole of mankind. This has

happened so that mankind might serve the Lord. That is the purpose! In practice, however, man puts deliverance at the service of a licentious life. It is intended that he should put liberty at the service of God. This does not concern believers here, but mankind in general. Mankind has been delivered and sin has been borne. One ought to serve the Lord. This is done by submitting oneself to the One who accomplished the deliverance. This is done from faith.

The gospel is preached to a mankind that has already been delivered. It is intended that man should use the liberty in which he has been placed to come to the acknowledgement of the Lord Jesus Christ. One died for all, therefore all died
(2 Corinthians 5:15). This applies to the whole of mankind. Through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, an end has been made to everything that could bind man. Some people are not free because they allow themselves to be bound. That leads to nothing and is certainly not God's intention. He has set mankind free so that they might serve Him—according to His good pleasure and according to His will!

2 Corinthians 5:15 then continues: "…that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." This last part refers to those who have come to faith. One has been delivered/set free so that one might serve God.

We have been delivered and have come to faith. It is, however, intended that we should be on our way to Canaan and have set our hope on that. The coming deliverance—the transition from the wilderness to Canaan—takes place only at the rapture of the Church. The story of the exodus from Egypt is applied to born-again people
(1 Corinthians 10:1 ff.). The story remains the same, but it is applied differently. Believers have been led out by faith and now live in fellowship with the Lord. They live in the midst of the wilderness, but the Lord cares for them. They live in the wilderness, yet they live from the blessings God promised concerning Canaan—as an advance on the coming inheritance. In the history of the people of Israel, only two believers (Joshua and Caleb) entered Canaan. Both are a picture of the present Church (the Body of Christ).

Deliverance has been accomplished for the whole world.

Only believers reach the final goal. "Deliverance" does not speak of the future but of the past. "Deliverance" presupposes that one has been redeemed. The question is not: From what has one been delivered? The real question is: To what has one been delivered? Why has one been delivered? One is delivered so that one might serve the Lord. This is illustrated by the loosing of the asses (Matthew 21:2–3). God sent Someone, just as the Lord sent His disciples. If anyone should ask questions, they were to say: "The Lord hath need of them." We are such asses, and we have been delivered (loosed). This was not done so that we should then wander about aimlessly, but so that we should serve the Lord.

The picture can be made even broader. In fact, deliverance took place much earlier—before the foundation of the world. In Genesis 1:2 deliverance was accomplished because judgement came upon the old, then-existing world (2 Peter 3:5–6; this does not refer to the flood in the

days of Noah, but to the flood of Genesis 1:2). Then, through the seven days of Genesis 1, deliverance was accomplished (see the Bible study “The teaching of restitution”). The old world—Egypt—corresponds to the then-world of Genesis 1:1. The exodus from Egypt corresponds to the work of the seven days (of Genesis 1). First the waters had to recede. Then the waters had to recede again (on the third day), which is a picture of the passage through the Red Sea (on the third day). On the evening of 14 Nisan the Passover lamb was slain and eaten for the first time—in Egypt (Exodus 12:6). First the lamb was slain before the overthrow (mistranslated as “foundation”) of the world (Revelation 13:8). This corresponds to the eating of the Passover lamb on 14 Nisan. This corresponds to the plans God made before the creation was judged. Genesis 1:1 speaks of this, and Egypt is a picture of it. In the night from 14 to 15 Nisan every firstborn was killed. This corresponds to the overthrow of the world (Genesis 1:2). The firstborn is the old creation. On the third day the waters receded and the dry land appeared. Then the dry land brought forth much. In Exodus the waters receded and the dry land appeared. Through that dry land a multitude of people passed. The exodus from Egypt can be seen as a foreshadowing of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time it is a projection of what had taken place much earlier—the story of Genesis 1. On the third day the earth appeared as we now know it. That was in a certain sense a delivered earth. For the earth had been rescued from death (the waters, the deep). In that sense we live in a world that has been led out from something that existed before that time.

The “picture” of the time in the wilderness can therefore be applied to the time since the death and resurrection of Christ. It is, however, better to place it two stages further back. Since Genesis 1, man has lived in a wilderness that in fact can bring forth no life. Since that time man has been told that he can have a share in a world that will only appear in the future. That is the new creation, of which Canaan is a picture. We now live in a world that is in principle delivered. The deliverance that has already taken place is further worked out in the course of history. This, incidentally, applies to many things. God appointed a date for the events. God Himself stands above time. For Him all things have already been accomplished from the overthrow of the world (Hebrews 4:3). God had in fact already done all His works. It is not a question of whether we understand this, but of whether we believe it. Those works have been accomplished. In the world, however, they are expressed in time, and therefore they take place one after another (with dates attached). It is the outworking of what God Himself has already accomplished—actively and with Himself.

The history of Genesis 1 develops, but it had already been determined beforehand. For a photographer this is easy to understand: something that is developed was already fixed beforehand. Deliverance had in fact already been accomplished. That is why, for example, Abraham and Noah could be reckoned righteous by God—before the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. God reckoned it to them beforehand because it was already certain that it would happen. For God it had in fact already

happened! The exodus from Egypt (the world) was arranged by God Himself. Man can add nothing to it or take anything from it. It is God's work. Man himself, however, must come to faith, or else he will have no share in the promised land. As soon as someone hears the message, he can come to faith. He ought not to harden his heart (compare Hebrews 3:15). Whoever rejects God's offer will perish (compare Hebrews 3:16–19). Those who sinned (the disobedient, the unbelieving) did not enter Canaan. It is a historical fact, but the principle also applies in our days. Unbelievers (those who will not hear) sin; they perish and miss the inheritance.

The same principle is also found in 1 Corinthians 10:1–11, although the matters there are placed in a different context. 1 Corinthians 10 does not apply to the whole world, but to the Church:

> 1 Corinthians 10:1–11
> 1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
> 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
> 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;
> 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.
> 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.
> 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.
> 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.
> 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.
> 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.
> 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.
> 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

In the first verses the word "all" is repeatedly used. It concerns the whole people who drank from the spiritual Rock (verse 4). They drank then from a literal rock. "Spiritual Rock" indicates that it was a rock with a spiritual meaning—namely, Christ. The majority of the people perished in the wilderness because God had no pleasure in them (verse 5). It concerns the same truth, but applied to the Church. This does not mean that someone who has been born again can be lost again. It does mean that the life of a born-again person can still prove useless because it is not used to the honour of the Lord.

The exodus from Egypt and the entry into Canaan are applied in two ways. Once to the world in general. In the wilderness one is called to believe (to come to faith). The second application is to the Church. It applies to the people of God, the believers. Here it concerns whether their life bears fruit. Whether someone has borne fruit (and thus receives reward) will be

evident at the judgement seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). The works will be judged (1 Corinthians 3:10–15). 1 Corinthians 3 clearly shows that the believer himself cannot lose eternal life. It is, however, possible that his works will not remain but will be burned up. He himself, however, will be saved (verse 15). Jude applies the exodus from Egypt to the whole world. Unbelievers are not saved. This is evident from Jude 4 - For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Here in Jude it concerns unbelieving, unregenerate people. They live under the grace of God because judgement is withheld. If God were not gracious, at the death of the Lord Jesus the whole old creation would have disappeared. At the cross the world was judged. God is, however, longsuffering, and therefore the world did not (yet) disappear then. The world therefore exists thanks to the grace of God. The Lord has all power in heaven and on earth (among other places, Matthew 28:18). The Lord is King and Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He reigns from grace, for He sits upon the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). Heaven and earth exist thanks to the grace of God. When one lives under that grace as licentious and ungodly, one turns the grace of God into lasciviousness. Thereby one denies the only Sovereign: God. Jude says in verse 5 that there are two judgements upon the unbelievers. The first judgement was at the overthrow of the old world (Genesis 1:2). The second judgement is the overthrow of the present world. That happens on the last day. The same principle is expressed by death and the second death. It is a double judgement.

“Again” means “nevertheless,” “in the second instance.” In the first instance the Egyptians were killed. In the second instance those were also killed who, though delivered from Egypt, did not believe. They perished in the wilderness. They had been delivered from Egypt and belonged to the people, but they were not believers. Here it does not concern the Church, but the world. The death of the Lord Jesus corresponds to the exodus from Egypt. There the world was judged. Since then the world is “the wilderness.” The preaching of the gospel to Israel in the wilderness was that they should live in trust/faith upon the Lord. Then they would be brought into Canaan and could already live in the wilderness from the blessings of Canaan—as an advance on the coming inheritance. Beside Jude 5 one should place 2 Peter 2:3:

> 2 Peter 2:3
> And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

This judgement corresponds to the swift destruction of 2 Peter 2:1. “Covetousness” is the same as “greed.” Through greed and with feigned words they will make merchandise of other believers. “Feigned words” indicates that they are human reasonings. “Merchandise” is another description for “Israel under the law.” Canaan and “Canaanitish” both carry the meaning of merchandise/trafficking.

> John 2:13–17

13 And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:
15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables;
16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.
17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

They had made the temple a house of merchandise (verse 16). “Merchandise” in this connection means religion applied on a human level. It is merely a business/trade (as part of the economy), from which one benefits oneself. Merchandise is found wherever religion is practised according to human standards. One does not make the world into merchandise, for that is what the world has always been. The service of God ought never to be that, for there it concerns living from grace. “Forgiveness of sins” was sold, and the proceeds from the sale of forgiveness were used to build the church. In practice it still happens today, although it is no longer called “indulgence.”

In 2 Peter 2 it concerns believers. They are made into merchandise. This actually happened with Israel. The cleansing of the temple is a picture of ending that merchandise. The merchandise in John 2 is a picture of the law, Judaism. The temple ought to have been broken down and rebuilt in three days (John 2:19–22). That also happened. This was the end of the old covenant. On the third day the new covenant appeared. Believers now form part of the cleansed temple. Believers ought to watch, lest that cleansed temple be made into merchandise again. Jude says that those who did not believe were destroyed. This is a general principle that always applies. Many people in this connection ask: What happens to people who never heard the message? The Bible teaches that man is saved by faith and lost by unbelief. “Faith” is an activity, and therefore “unbelief” is also an activity. Unbelief means rejecting the message. It does not point to ignorance. Those who perished in the wilderness knew the message but rejected it. They rejected the Lord. In Romans 1:18–21 it is explained what happens to people who never heard the message:

Romans 1:18–21
18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.
20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened;

No man is excusable. Everyone has knowledge of it. In Romans 1:18 it does not say that one does not know the truth. It says that one holds the truth in unrighteousness. God Himself has shown it to them (Romans 1:19). God has told them from the beginning of the creation of the world (from Genesis 1:1) through His creation. Man studies the creatures (the creation) and thereby comes to knowledge of God. A few centuries ago people had no difficulty with this, for the study of creation then had only one purpose: to know God. From ancient times nature was therefore studied by believing people. Knowledge of nature was found within the church. Science (the only science outside theological science) was practised only by monks—for religious reasons. Later it was discovered that knowledge of nature could also be used for technical purposes. Then things got out of hand. Since then, science has come to mean technology. It is not science but the abuse of it. From ancient times the study of nature was the work of theologians—as a support to theology (the knowledge of God). People then still knew that there are two ways to know God: through Scripture (the Bible) and through the creature (creation). Every person can know God from creation. If one does not know, it is because one has rejected God. One is not interested in a Creator. At most one declares creation to be its own creator. Yet one is responsible for the knowledge God Himself has imparted. Every person naturally needs time to learn certain things, for when one is born one knows nothing. The things of God are understood and clearly seen from creation. That is more than superficial knowledge. When one looks through creation, one sees things that are in themselves invisible. Behind the outward world there proves to be a world of spiritual things. Through the outward things…
Through the outward things one can see the invisible things,
and one ought to live from them.

Jude 6
And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

This verse deals with a group of fallen angels who abandoned their spiritual, heavenly bodies, corrupted the original world, and are now bound in chains under darkness, awaiting final judgement on the last day. Their story serves as a solemn reminder of the certainty of God’s delayed but inevitable judgement upon all rebellion—past, present, and future. Believers are called to contend for the faith in light of this reality.
The specific group of angels who did not remain in their original, proper position (“first estate”) but abandoned their own “habitation” (Greek: oikētērion, a spiritual/heavenly body; see 2 Corinthians 5:2). As a result, God has reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness until the judgment of the great day (the final judgement on the last day).
Key Points:

1. Their Original State

    - These angels were created with a spiritual, heavenly body (their “habitation”).
    - This body is the same term used for the believer’s future house “from heaven” (2 Corinthians 5:2).
    - They possessed a higher, heavenly form but deliberately left it, taking on a lower, material form.
2. Their Sin
    - They abandoned their proper spiritual habitation.
    - This refers primarily to the fallen angels who had intercourse with human women before the flood of Genesis 1:2 (the original world’s judgement), producing giants (Genesis 6:1–4).
    - These angels are the “sons of God” in Genesis 6, who corrupted the pre-Adamic world, leading to its judgement by water (the flood of Genesis 1:2; 2 Peter 3:5–6).
    - The same sin occurred again after the flood (Genesis 6:4 – “and also after that”), producing further giants (e.g., Goliath).
3. Their Current State
    - God has bound them in everlasting chains under darkness (the “outer darkness”; Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).
    - This darkness is outside the creation; light is within (the sanctuary where Christ has entered, Hebrews 9:12, 24–25).
    - They are reserved in Tartarus (Greek mythological term adopted in 2 Peter 2:4), the prison of the Titans/giants who rebelled.
4. Their Future
    - They are kept until the judgment of the great day (the final judgement on the last day; Revelation 20:11–15).
    - This judgement includes both the pre-Adamic world (demons/spirits of that era) and the present world.
    - The flood of Noah (Genesis 6–9) is a type (echo and foreshadowing) of the earlier judgement (Genesis 1:2) and the future judgement by fire (2 Peter 3:12).

Broader Biblical Context

- The angels of Jude 6 are not the same as Satan and his demons who still operate freely in this age.
- Their sin and binding occurred before Adam; their judgement is delayed until the end.
- The pattern is repeated: corruption by fallen angels → judgement by water (Genesis 1:2 and Noah) → future judgement by fire.
- Genesis 6 is both historical and typological: it points back to the pre-Adamic fall and forward to the end times, when similar events (including giants and “marrying and giving in marriage”) will occur again (Matthew 24:37–39).
- The entire present world exists in a state of overlap: the judged old creation and the coming new creation coexist, with grace reigning until the final revelation of Christ’s kingdom.

reserved these angels under darkness. That darkness is elsewhere called “the outer darkness” (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). The Lord has entered

the sanctuary (Hebrews 9:12, 24–25; 10:19). That is within (Hebrews 6:19). There is light. The light is therefore within (the creation), and the darkness is without (the creation). These angels are reserved unto “the judgment of the great day.” “Judgment” and “day” are synonymous. We know the expression “to bring before the judgment.” Things are then “brought to light.” One is “summoned.” The Greek word for “judgment” is krisis. The word for “day” is hēmera. Krisis appears again in Jude 9 and 15 (“judgment”; see also appendix). The judgment spoken of here is the judgment on the last day. “The last judgment” and “the last day” are in fact synonyms, for the last is the youngest, and “judgment” and “day” are synonymous. How long the judgment is postponed makes no difference, for that judgment is coming nonetheless. This applies not only to Israel, but also to the angels (2 Peter 2:4). The judgment of the last day is found in:

> Revelation 20:13
> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

“Hell” is an inaccurate translation. The Greek word is hadēs, which means “realm of the dead.” “Death and Hades” is a synonym. “Death” is a designation for the condition as such. “Hades” is the place designation. In Hades is death. Here it concerns the same dead who come out of death—that is, out of Hades. Revelation 20:13 further states: “…and the sea gave up the dead which were in it.” If this referred simply to the literal sea, it would have to say: “The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and the land gave up the dead which were in it.” But that is not said, from which it must be concluded that “sea” here is not the designation for the literal sea. All people who have lived since Adam come into Hades. There is one exception: the believers of the present Church. Of Enoch (who is a picture of the present Church) it is said that he was taken so that he should not see death (see explanation at Jude 14). A synonym for “sea” is “deep.” The Greek uses two different words for this: abyssos for deep, and thalassa = dithalassos for sea. Who are in the sea/deep? They are those who formed part of the original world (of Genesis 1:1), of which Egypt is a picture. The old world was judged. Egypt was at that time judged by the waters of the sea (the Red Sea). The waters of the third day are the same waters as those before the first day. They are the waters through which the then-world perished (2 Peter 3:6; flood = great flood). The world that was then overthrown came under the sea. “Sea” in Revelation 20:13 is the designation for that original world that was once judged. That world has not yet been definitively judged. That will happen on the last day. Among the categories that will then be judged are also the demons, for they have their origin in that original world of Genesis 1:1. Demons are the spirits of those who lived before Adam (that is, in the world before the overthrow of Genesis 1:2). When the Lord judged demons, they asked Him whether He had come to torment them before the time (Matthew 8:29). This means they know they will be judged. They were then cast into the sea (Matthew 8:32) to be kept there until their judgment on the last day. The Bible only rarely refers directly to the original world of Genesis 1:1. It

refers to it in veiled terms. The judgment of Revelation 20:13 therefore comes upon two categories: those of the then-world and those of the present world. In Jude 6 it concerns angels. Here it is about spiritual beings, although “angel” can also refer to a human messenger. These angels did not keep their first estate but left their own habitation. “Their first estate” is therefore “their own habitation.” The Greek word for “habitation” is oikētērion. This word occurs only once more, namely in:2 Corinthians 5:2

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

In 2 Corinthians 5:2 it likewise refers to a spiritual body. This word is therefore used in the Bible exclusively with reference to a spiritual body. Here it is used for the first time and also explained. It says afterwards: “which is from heaven.” This habitation is a house (2 Corinthians 5:1) that is from heaven. Our natural body is a tabernacle (2 Corinthians 5:1). That body is from the earth, earthly (1 Corinthians 15:47). When the earthly house is dissolved, we (believers!) receive another house called a “habitation.” That habitation relates to a body of heavenly origin (compare 1 Corinthians 15:44). In

1 Corinthians 15 various things are said about the earthly and the heavenly body:

the earthly body	the heavenly body
natural	spiritual
earthly (material)	heavenly
corruptible	incorruptible
mortal	immortal

In Jude 6 the same word “habitation” is used. From 2 Corinthians 5:2 we know that this word is used for “a heavenly body.” Their first estate (principle, beginning) was a spiritual body, for with that these angels were created. They left that body. Apparently they could do so, though it was not the intention. They were created in that spiritual, heavenly body, but they laid that body aside.

It becomes clear which angels Jude 6 is speaking about from:

> Genesis 6:1–4
> 1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,
> 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.
> 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.
> 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

“Sons of God” in the Old Testament is the designation for angels (Job 38:7; children = sons). These angels had intercourse with women, which implies

that they had taken on a different body. In fact, the higher always contains the lower within itself. It rises above it. Of its own power “the lower” cannot reach “the higher.” The reverse is possible. Man cannot ascend to God, but God can descend to man. A man cannot “acquire” a habitation for himself, but whoever possesses such a habitation can “put on” a lower, material body. That, however, is a form of humiliation. In Genesis 6 it is stated that there were angels (sons of God) who took this path. Therefore there came a judgment upon them and their offspring. Genesis 6:4 says: “…the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”
The point of this story is that the flood is not merely a foreshadowing of the final judgment. The flood is first of all an echo of the far greater flood that preceded it (Genesis 1:2). Through that not only the earth perished, but even the heavens (2 Peter 3:6; “world” is the translation of the Greek kosmos, which includes heavens and earth). Confusion often arises because people think 2 Peter 3 speaks of the flood, whereas it actually refers to the flood of Genesis 1:2. The flood is (retrospectively!) an illustration of the judgment that had earlier come upon the world, as described in Genesis 1:2. The reason for the flood is the same as the reason for the earlier flood of Genesis 1:2. In Jude 6 it is not only about the angels mentioned in Genesis 6. After the flood, incidentally, there were still more angels who did the same thing, for the Bible later speaks of “giants” (Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 3:11, 13; Joshua 12:4; 13:12). Upon those angels there came no judgment. Upon the angels in Genesis 6 there came a judgment because it has a typological function. It is not a type pointing forward, but backward. It points first of all back to the judgment described in Genesis 1:2. Through Genesis 1:2 it points forward to the judgment by fire that will take place in the future (2 Peter 3:12).
We find the same thing with regard to the eating of the Passover lamb, which Israel observed every year. It was a remembrance of the first Passover lamb that was slain and eaten at the exodus from Egypt. That first Passover lamb, however, points forward to the slaying of the last Passover lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ.
The flood pointed back to the past. That is why the Lord added that it would be the last time the earth would be judged by water (Genesis 9:11). When the Lord brings judgment in the future, it will be by fire (2 Peter 3:12). The flood (of Genesis 1:2) came upon the world of the ungodly, which had been infiltrated by Satan and even by fallen angels. Through that, other life had entered. Judgment came upon that. The same thing happened in the days of Noah, leading to the flood.
Jude 6 speaks primarily of the fallen angels who were judged by the flood of Genesis 1:2. In Old Testament times fallen angels likewise had intercourse with women, from which giants were born. This phenomenon does not occur now, because the enemy is now obliged to work in secret. In the entire Old Testament period, however, it did happen. That is why Genesis 6:4 says “and also after that.” This indicates that it did not happen only then, but also after the days of the flood. Goliath, for example, was such a giant. He is also a picture of the beast from the sea (Revelation 13).

When “that Wicked” (2 Thessalonians 2:8) is revealed in the future, giants will again appear on the earth. It has already been announced that in the days of Christ’s return it will be as in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37 ff.). “Marrying and giving in marriage” has little to do with marriage. It points to angels having intercourse with women. Outwardly they will probably appear as UFOs. It indeed concerns “extraterrestrial beings,” but then viewed from the biblical worldview (hollow earth; see Bible study “The Biblical Worldview”). Those extraterrestrial beings come from the outer darkness, namely from under the sea. The fall of the original world (of Genesis 1:1) was that fallen angels occupied themselves with the “mankind” of that world. They corrupted that “mankind” (which of course did not descend from Adam) both morally and physically. Judgment therefore came upon that world (Genesis 1:2).

The usual explanation of Jude 6 is that this verse speaks of the angels from the days of Noah (Genesis 6). In reality it concerns the angels who fell before Genesis 1:2. The flood and everything connected with it is a picture of everything that happened then (Genesis 1). It is also a picture of what will happen in the future. The angels (of Jude 6) left their habitation. In 2 Corinthians 5:1–2 it is stated that when the believer leaves his earthly tabernacle (body), he receives a habitation from God. He therefore receives that body at the moment of death. Strictly speaking, this cannot be called a “glorified body,” because glorification takes place only at the rapture of the Church. 2 Corinthians 5 then speaks of “clothing” and “being clothed upon,” which relates to the believer’s reward. When the believer receives reward, that reward will in some way be expressed also in his new body. 2 Corinthians 5, however, makes no distinction between the body the believer receives at death and the situation that arises after the rapture of the Church, when he will appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). 2 Corinthians 5 does not state whether the habitation he receives in heaven at death (compare Philippians 1:23) will change at the rapture of the Church or not.

The angels who left their first estate are kept by God in everlasting chains under darkness. They are reserved unto the final judgment. Peter writes about this in:

> 2 Peter 2:4
> For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

“To cast down to hell” is the translation of the Greek verb tartaroō. It means “to cast into Tartarus.” Here the Bible uses a term derived from Greek mythology. Strictly speaking, it was not necessary to use this term, for Jude does not use it and yet says the same thing. This mythological term is used here by the Bible, which means that the Bible endorses the meaning the Greeks gave to the concept of “Tartarus.”

Homer describes Tartarus as an underground place. Moreover, he describes it as the prison of the Titans. Those are giants. They were imprisoned because they rebelled against Zeus (the chief god). The Bible uses this same word and says that angels came into it. In Genesis 6 it is said that there were giants (Titans) on the earth. “These are the mighty

men which were of old” refers to those giants. They were of old. When was that? Before the overthrow of the world. The earth became waste, void, and darkness because of the deep (see Bible study on the restitution teaching) through the flood of Genesis 1:2. In that deep these giants (Titans) are found.
Because the Bible has adopted this concept, it has become a biblical concept and is therefore true! The same principle applies to the concept of “demon.” The word “demon” is also derived from Greek mythology. It is not at all necessary to use that word, because “demons” (often translated “devils”) are also called “evil/unclean spirits” in the Bible—even within one verse (Luke 4:33, 35–36; 8:2, 29; 9:42; Revelation 18:2). The meaning Greek mythology gives to the concepts of “Tartarus” and “demon” is correct, for the Bible uses these words and thereby endorses the meaning. Mythology knows good and evil demons, whereas the Bible says that all demons are evil. This, incidentally, also applies to man. The Bible teaches that all men are evil (Romans 3:9–19), while man thinks there are good and evil men. According to Greek mythology, a demon is the spirit of someone who lived before a judgment came upon the whole of mankind. That is also the meaning of the word “demon” in the Bible. A demon is the spirit of someone who lived before the moment when “mankind” became mortal, before there was a struggle between the gods, and “death” and “labour” entered.
The world that then was still exists in the world that now is. The final judgment upon everything will take place on the last day. The world that will be (the new creation) has long since begun, namely at the resurrection of Christ. This means that we live in a time when the world of then and the coming world overlap.
Due to this overlap, a very strange world has come into being,
and it is in that world that we live.
Homer describes Tartarus as an underground place. Moreover, he describes it as the prison of the Titans. These are giants. They were imprisoned because they rebelled against Zeus (the chief god). The Bible uses this same word and states that angels have come into it. In Genesis 6 it is said that there were giants (Titans) on the earth. “These are the mighty men which were of old” refers to those giants. They were of old. When was that? Before the overthrow of the world. The earth became waste, void, and darkness because of the deep (see the Bible study on the restitution teaching) through the flood of Genesis 1:2. In that deep these giants (Titans) are found.
This principle occurs many times in the Bible.
One example is found in Jude 5. The deliverance out of Egypt was naturally only complete when one arrived in Canaan. Yet from the exodus out of Egypt onwards, one already lived from the blessings one would receive in Canaan. On the one hand, the period can be reckoned with Egypt, for one was still on the way to the promise. On the other hand, the period in the wilderness can be reckoned with Canaan, because one received an advance on the blessings God would give only in Canaan. This principle also applies to the believers of our dispensation. Paul says that the believer is part of the age to come. He already lives in that age/that

kingdom, for he has been delivered from the present evil age (Galatians 1:4; “world” = age). Yet he also says that the believer should live soberly in this present age (Titus 2:12; “world” = age). Both things are true, for both worlds exist alongside one another.

Jude 7 – 8
Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
Jude 8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.
Jude continues the series of examples of judgement by linking the sin and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha (and surrounding cities) to the same pattern seen in the unbelieving Israelites (v. 5) and the fallen angels (v. 6).

The Example of Sodom and Gomorrha
- They gave themselves over to fornication and went after strange flesh — a deliberate departure from their created order and natural use (homosexuality is the primary biblical meaning, but the principle is broader: unfaithfulness to God’s original design and calling).
- Like Israel and the angels, they abandoned their first estate (their proper place and purpose before God).
- Their sin was not merely immoral acts but a fundamental rejection of God’s created order, making themselves independent of their Creator — which always leads to death and judgement.
- They are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
    - Their destruction by fire was historical and literal, yet it serves as a type (picture) of the final judgement by eternal fire on the last day.
    - “Eternal fire” does not mean the fire still burns today (the site is now the Dead Sea), but that everything cast into it is permanently consumed — nothing comes out again. It is a place of complete and irreversible destruction, not purification.
    - The two major judgements of old were by water (the flood of Genesis 1:2 and Noah) and by fire (Sodom); the future judgement will be by fire (2 Peter 3:12).
    - Sodom points forward to the judgement on living mankind at Christ’s appearing (preceding the last day), just as the flood pointed back to the original judgement.

Jude 8 – The Parallel with the “Certain Men”
- “These” refers back to the ungodly men of verse 4 who crept in secretly.
- They are filthy dreamers — living in spiritual sleep/ignorance, unconscious of reality and God’s sovereign rule.
- Their threefold sin mirrors the pattern of departure:
    1. Defile the flesh — they abuse their bodies and the created order (parallel to Sodom’s fornication and strange flesh).

2. Despise dominion — they reject the lordship and authority of the only Sovereign, Christ Jesus.
3. Speak evil of dignities — they blaspheme the glories and exalted position of Christ (His heavenly session, grace, and the blessings believers have in Him).

- Their behaviour is the practical outworking of denying the only Sovereign (v. 4). By abusing grace and rejecting Christ's rule, they live as though God is silent or powerless, turning His longsuffering into licence for sin.

Their fiery destruction is a warning and type of the coming judgement on the ungodly. The "certain men" of verse 4 do exactly the same: they defile the flesh, despise Christ's dominion, and blaspheme His dignities. Their condemnation is certain — the judgement is coming, though delayed in this age of grace. Believers must recognise this pattern, contend for the faith, and live in submission to the only Sovereign, refusing to abuse the grace in which the whole world now stands.

Here it concerns an example, for the verse 7 begins with "even as." Judgment was pronounced upon Sodom, and that judgment came. It says here: "…giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." "Sodom, Gomorrha, and the cities about them" committed fornication in the same way as the angels in Jude 6. The broad outline is as follows:
The children of Israel (Jude 5) did not hold fast to their first estate. They were delivered out of Egypt. If they had remained so, they would naturally have arrived in Canaan. They did not arrive there because they let go of their first estate. They forgot the Lord and perished in the wilderness. The angels likewise abandoned their first estate and went after strange flesh. They have already been judged, are kept under darkness, and will be definitively judged in the future. The same applies precisely to Sodom and Gomorrha. Like Israel in the wilderness and the angels, they sinned. They did not remain faithful to their first estate, abandoned their original habitation, and went after strange flesh.
The Bible understands "Sodom" to mean homosexuality (especially between men). They became unfaithful to their original calling. Whoever detaches himself from his original calling (detaches himself from the created order) and thereby becomes unfaithful to his Creator makes himself independent. Since man has no life in himself, the "independent" man goes into death. Man is never independent, but always bound by the bands of death. Man needs Someone who stands above those bands and can set him free, so that He may lead him to a world where there is no death. Whoever detaches himself from God's plan for creation comes under judgment. Every man is a slave to sin and has therefore abandoned his first estate. The only way to remain faithful to that first estate is to turn to the Lord, who is the Alpha (and therefore the Beginning) (Revelation 1:8, 11). Only in Him is there life. One must accept the Lord Jesus Christ by faith as the Deliverer (from the past) and Saviour (who

brings to the future). Whoever does that receives His life. Whoever does not do so lets go of his first estate and comes under judgment.
Sodom and Gomorrha are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. They are presented as an example and are cited here as such. The judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrha is a picture of the punishment of eternal fire on the last day. The two great judgments of those days were the flood and the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrha. The first judgment came by water, the second by fire. The flood points back to “the oldest day,” while the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrha points forward to “the last day.” Sodom appears frequently in the Bible. The first account is found in Genesis 13 and 14. Sodom was delivered by Abraham. When that happened, Melchisedec appeared. Sodom is therefore a picture of this world, which in the past (in Genesis 1) was already delivered. As soon as that happened, the Mediator of the new covenant appeared: Christ. The same Sodom that was first saved by Abraham (in the power of the Lord) was shortly afterwards judged (by that same Lord) (Genesis 19). Before Sodom was judged, Abraham was 99 years old and was told he would have a son (deliverance would come). After that, Sodom was destroyed. Then the deliverer appeared: Isaac, who is a picture of Christ. Before the world was overthrown, the Lamb was slain. After the world was overthrown, He actually appeared. This principle repeats itself continually. Sodom and Gomorrha are repeatedly cited as a warning and an example of the judgment that will ultimately come upon the whole creation (among other places, Deuteronomy 29:23; 32:32; Isaiah 3:9; Jeremiah 23:14; Amos 4:11; Matthew 11:23–24).

> Isaiah 1:8–9
> 8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.
> 9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrha.

There was a remnant of Sodom and Gomorrha. It was taken out before the judgment came. That remnant was Lot, who was righteous (2 Peter 2:7). Isaiah 1:9 is one of the texts on which the doctrine of election is based. “It is the Lord who ensures that a remnant remains,” people say. That is correct, but in Romans it is stated whom He has chosen. God chooses the believer! God chose the righteous Lot because he believed. “Lot” means that he had a covering. He did not know everything so well because there was a covering over him. He was a believer and therefore he was saved. He himself did not even really know what was happening to him. There are believers who wonder what the practical use is of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha. There is actually no practical use that can be named. The Bible says that their destruction is set forth for an example (Jude 7). That could be called “practical use.” If Sodom and Gomorrha had not been destroyed in Abraham’s days, they would be destroyed on the last day. The judgment is coming nonetheless. In their case it happened earlier—for an example. They were judged, and that was a righteous judgment. It is extensively recorded in the Bible so that people may draw their conclusions from it.

Jude 7 says that Sodom and Gomorrha are set forth for an example: suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. The judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrha is an example of the judgment on the last day. Moreover, it was a judgment preceding the last day, in which a part of mankind was judged. Jude is not speaking only of the judgment on the last day, but especially also of the judgment that will come upon living mankind—preceding the last day. This applies to the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrha. It likewise applies to the judgment upon Israel, of which the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrha is among other things a picture. It is also a picture of the judgment upon Babylon (Isaiah 13; Jeremiah 50). The judgment upon Babylon does not come on the last day, but at least a thousand years before it. The judgment upon Edom (Jeremiah 49:7–22) likewise takes place far before the last day.

The events of Old Testament history are a picture of God's dealings in general. This means that judgment comes upon creation, in which a remnant from that creation is saved. This principle is evident in the flood in the days of Noah. It is evident in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha. It also applies with regard to the flood of Genesis 1:2. From the old earth that was then judged, Adam appeared (with all the negative consequences). Adam was of the earth, earthy (1 Corinthians 15:47). The creation was judged at the death of the Lord Jesus. Yet on that same occasion people were saved from the old creation. They rose from the dead and lived after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 27:52–53). There is always a remnant. When Abram was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, that was the calling of the believing remnant. The Old Testament history happened to them, is for our example, and is written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Corinthians 10:11). The judgment upon Sodom is called "eternal fire." Does that fire still burn now? No! It may have burned for a few days then, but then it was extinguished. Now only a salt sea (the Dead Sea) remains. Is it then not eternal fire? Yes it is, but one must understand what that means. It means that everything went into it. Moreover, it indicates that everything that went in never comes out again. No place was found for Sodom and Gomorrha any more. They were therefore never rebuilt. The same applies to the judgment on the last day. The judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrha was an example of that future judgment. Whatever is cast into the lake of fire never comes out again.

There are people who say that fire points to purification. They say: "The sinner has many sins (impurities) in him, but that is not serious, for he is cast into the lake of fire. Since 'fire' is the place of purification, all those sins are burned up, after which the sinner comes forth from that fire without sins." This is one form of universalism (all-reconciliation). It is a false teaching! The sinner does not only sin. He is sinful. In other words: when everything impure is burned up, nothing remains. Nothing more can come out of the fire. Fire does have a purifying effect, but only when that which goes into the fire is fire-resistant. The whole creation goes into the fire, and only that which belongs to the new creation comes out again. Whatever belongs to the old creation disappears. The fire is a place of

torment from which one never comes out again. When everything is burned up, the fire goes out of itself.

The filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Those described here as “these” were called “certain men” in Jude 4. They were before ordained to this condemnation. They are in a dream state, defile the flesh, despise dominion (of Christ), and speak evil of dignities (of Christ). It is precisely because of these things that they were ordained to condemnation. The Israelites were told they would be judged. Because of unbelief they would not enter the promised land. The angels were told they would be judged. Even the demons who are not in Tartarus know they will be judged (Matthew 8:29). Before the flood it was announced that judgment would come after 120 years (Genesis 6:3). We now live in the dispensation of grace (Ephesians 3:2), but God will certainly judge one day. Although people want nothing to do with that judgment, that judgment will come—at the time appointed by God for it. At the judgment of God, believers will always be taken away before that judgment. Believers do not come into judgment, for they are delivered by God (1 Thessalonians 1:10). The remnant is always saved. In our days there is also a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11:5). The remnant is always taken away from the place where judgment comes. Since in the future the whole earth comes under judgment, no other place remains for our evacuation than heaven. This is only one argument for the rapture of the Church to heaven. This world is hastening toward a coming judgment, under the leadership of the only true Sovereign, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. All nations and all cities will fall under that judgment. Before that happens, the Lord will come to take us to Himself, so that we may be where He is (1 Thessalonians 4:17). These facts of salvation are not in the least doubtful. God does it. He has demonstrated in the past the manner in which He acts. His manner is clear: before His judgment comes, He delivers the believers. That is why Paul says in:

> 1 Thessalonians 5:9–11
> 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
> 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
> 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

We are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation. That is not on the basis of our works, but through our Lord Jesus Christ. Whether we watch or sleep (though that is not the intention; 1 Thessalonians 5:6), we shall live together with Him. The outcome does not depend on us, but on Him, and therefore it will happen. The believer is of course called to watch, so that he knows what is going on. He ought to know “what time it is” and what his position is. If all is well, he expects the rapture of the Church. If someone is a believer and has no knowledge of these things (or does not live from them), this promise does not change. He may be sleeping, but he will nonetheless live with the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11 it is

translated: “Wherefore comfort yourselves together.” Yet the Greek says exactly the same as in 1 Thessalonians 4:18, where it is translated “comfort one another.” In Greek both cases use precisely the same word: parakaleō. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 can therefore (better) be translated: “Wherefore comfort one another…” 1 Thessalonians 4 ends with “comfort one another with these words.” The words intended here relate to the rapture of the Church, so that we shall ever be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The same words appear again in 1 Thessalonians 5:11. We ought therefore to connect both passages. The only comfort/edification (building up) for the believer is that he has set his expectation on the Lord who will meet him in the air. He is comforted/edified by the expectation that he will go to meet that Lord in the air to be with Him for ever.

“These” are in a dream state (Jude 8). “Sleep” is a sign of life. Yet it is a life that is not conscious of the surrounding circumstances. “Sleep” indicates that someone is leading his own life and has no connection with the things happening around him. That is why “sleep” is often synonymous with the concept of “death.” Someone who is dead exists, yet not here on earth. The dead have no knowledge of the things happening on earth. They are separated from the things on earth. We speak of “sleep” because we know that the sleeper will naturally wake up again. This does not apply to someone who is dead. These sleepers are not conscious of the things happening around them. This actually applies to all the ungodly (Jude 4). Those who are without God/are living without Him are not conscious (and cannot be conscious) of the circumstances in which they find themselves. God has anointed His King (Psalm 2:6), but those on earth have no knowledge of it. They sleep and do not know that He has long been on the throne. They think no one is on the throne and then conclude that they themselves can (go and) sit on that throne. They think they are “the crown of creation.” The unbeliever (atheist) has made himself into a “god.” He does not know what exalted position Christ has as the Firstborn of the new creation. The unbeliever does not know Christ as the One to whom all power is given, and therefore he sleeps. Through his ignorance he blasphemes the only Sovereign—God and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4). Jude 8 says: “They despise dominion and speak evil of dignities.” There is only One who has dominion: the only Sovereign, God. They blaspheme God—not only when they are directly in rebellion against God, but also when they abuse God’s silence. By that they abuse the grace of God and turn it into lasciviousness (Jude 4). Here it concerns unbelieving mankind in general. They reject the dominion of Christ and blaspheme the dignities. The dignities are of course those of the Lord. That glory, for example, was seen by Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1 ff.) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:28; 3:23). That glory was last seen on the Mount of Olives (Ezekiel 11:23) and never again. The same happened with the literal glory of the Lord, the risen Christ. As far as the earth is concerned, He was last seen on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9–12) and never again. After that He was seen a few more times, but that was in heaven (for example, Acts 7:56). The first time He will be seen again on earth is once more on the Mount of Olives. The dignity is the exalted Christ who rose from the dead.

He hid Himself via the Mount of Olives. In the future He will reveal Himself again via that same Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives is a picture of the hidden kingdom and thereby also a picture of the Church. The dignities are blasphemed. These dignities are now part of Christ Himself. They concern His exaltation and everything connected with it. All the blessings with which the believers of the fifth dispensation are blessed—in Christ and in the heavenlies (Ephesians 1:3)—form part of these dignities. One of the most important dignities is “the grace of our God” (Jude 4), with which He has abounded toward us (Ephesians 1:7–8). All the dignities are blasphemed, and especially grace, for it is turned into lasciviousness (Jude 4).

“Dominion” indicates that Someone is on the throne. Christ sits on the throne of grace. The dignities point first of all to the grace of God that has come to us in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:4). Through Him grace reigns (Romans 5:21). Dominion and dignities point to the glory of Christ in our dispensation—in expectation of the revelation of His judgment on earth. Judgment is not now pronounced. Yet judgment must come, for a righteous Sovereign sits on the throne. Judgment is postponed. Peter says about this in:

> 2 Peter 3:9, 15–18
> 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
> 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;
> 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.
> 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.
> 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

All matters concerning this world have already been settled. Before judgment comes, man is given the opportunity to repent to the Lord. Judgment is coming, but the condemned can appeal to the grace of God. That is why the sentence has not yet been executed, although the condemned in general wants nothing to do with it. He prefers to sleep. John says essentially the same thing.

John 3:16–19
16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
The world now lives in the grace of God. That grace has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11). Yet not everyone receives eternal life. That is only for those who believe (come to faith). God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world (John 3:17). That was not the purpose, yet He did! The Son died on the cross, and thereby the world was judged. God sent His Son so that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). Here "the world" cannot be filled in as the Church, or else it would be nonsense. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). What this condemnation involves is stated immediately afterwards: though the Light has come into the world, men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. The world now lives in darkness because it has rejected the Light.
God has given His Son (seated upon the throne!). Whoever believes in Him is not condemned. Whoever does not believe is already condemned. The word "condemned" also carries the sense of "executed." The sentence has already been pronounced. If the condemned person does not come to faith, he will be executed. These "certain men" (from Jude 4) defile the flesh (Jude 8). This means they abuse the flesh. They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil (John 3:19)
And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
The judgment that has come upon man since the resurrection of Christ is that the Light has departed from the world (John 9:5; 12:35–36, 46). The world has been left behind in darkness. That is why man sleeps, living in ignorance under the curse of darkness. Man prefers darkness to light because he practises the works of darkness. Criminals also prefer to work in the dark. Mankind did not want the Light, and the Light departed.
Believers do walk in the light (Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:4–5), but they can do so only because they have been seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6). God has shone into the believer—in his heart (2 Corinthians 4:6)—because he has been seated with Christ in heaven.
Paul expresses these things even more clearly than John:

> Romans 1:22–32
> 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
> 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
> 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
> 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.
> 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

> 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.
> 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
> 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
> 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
> 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
> 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Whoever calls himself “wise” is a fool. Men have exchanged the glory of the uncorruptible God. What belonged to God they have given to the creation (namely to man). They have declared man “divine.” Others have exalted birds to “god” because they can fly high (something no man can do). Men have exalted all kinds of animals to “god” and worshipped them. This still happens today. Because man wants nothing to do with God, God has given him up (Romans 1:24). This applies to our (fifth) dispensation—from the resurrection of Christ until the revelation of His wrath. That is the period that runs between His glorification and the manifestation of His glory. Men have changed the Light/the Truth of God into darkness/the lie (Romans 1:25). God has hidden Himself. Since then man can only appeal to His grace. Yet they abuse His grace (verse 4) by dishonouring their bodies among themselves (Romans 1:24; Jude 8). Therefore God has even given them up to vile affections (impure passions; Romans 1:26). From Romans 1:28 onwards it concerns a depraved mind, which results in all kinds of impure actions. Man uses the grace of God not only to live as he himself pleases (he has declared himself “god”), but he even uses that grace to abuse his own life/flesh. Man has far too little sense of standards within himself to be left to his own fate. There are all sorts of things in society (such as government, local community, and the like) that prevent man from doing what he would like to do.

The ungodly abuse “the silence” of God. They abuse their own bodies and nature. This is not about environmental problems. “Abuse of the body” does not only refer to what is mentioned in Romans 1:26–27. It refers to every endeavour of man to exalt himself and determine his own standards. By doing so he places himself in the position of God and in fact sets himself higher than God. God permits all this. He is longsuffering and does not intervene. In the (near) future, however, His judgment will come, as Paul explains in:

> Romans 2:1–5
> 1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself;

for thou that judgest doest the same things.
2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.
3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?
5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Man thinks he can escape the judgment of God (Romans 2:3). God is now good and forbearing so that man may come to faith (Romans 2:4). Whoever does not repent treasures up wrath for himself (Romans 2:5). Man is inclined to gather treasures. Here is that treasure: “wrath.” That treasure grows ever larger, for if one does not make use of God’s longsuffering, the result will be precisely the opposite. Instead of wrath being removed, that wrath grows ever greater. If God’s wrath had come in the past, you and I would not be sinners. In that case you and I would not have existed at all. Far fewer people would then come under judgment. Through the grace of God many are saved. Yet it also means that many come under judgment. The longer one lives, the more wrath one treasures up for oneself. From God’s perspective one would benefit from dying as early as possible, for then one would treasure up less wrath. The longer this dispensation of grace lasts, the greater God’s wrath becomes. This applies not only to the judgment on the last day, but especially to the wrath that will come upon living nations in the next (sixth) dispensation (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 6:17).

Since the resurrection of Christ man has defiled his flesh and even the whole old creation. He is given full liberty to do so, though that liberty was not intended for that purpose. That liberty was given to him so that he might come to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who counts faith for righteousness. God is gracious and man may draw near to Him. Whoever does not do so abuses that liberty. Jude writes here that these people sleep. In his days people had been awakened, because the gospel was then preached to all nations. Moreover, the name of the people who were at least confronted with the gospel stands above this epistle: Judah. Historically these people were awake, yet they have been put to sleep. Of mankind in general it cannot be said that everyone knows the gospel and has rejected it. When we speak of “nations” (and thus not of individuals), we must acknowledge that the gospel has been preached to all nations. All nations know traditions that are evangelical in character. All nations have therefore been awakened. The Light has shone upon them (John 1:9–10). Moreover, Romans 1:18–19 says that no man is excusable, because every man has knowledge of the things of God. If someone does not know, it is because he does not want to know.

2 Peter 2:9–10 was already illustrated in Jude 5–7:

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:
10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

The unjust are reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished. This applies especially to those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise government. This last is a sign of unbelief. They know the government but despise it. They do not walk after the Spirit but consciously (!) walk after the flesh. They please themselves instead of God. They speak evil of dignities. Peter speaks of others than Jude does. Jude speaks of unbelievers, while Peter speaks of believers who are not willing to live in accordance with the things of God. There are indeed also believers who are carnal. They do not wish to let the Lord into their practical life.Jude makes clear that man in general is unfaithful to the counsel of God (compare Luke 7:30). God has made known His plan for the world and has said in what way man can have a place in it. This is not only for man's instruction, but so that he might conform/submit himself to it. It is intended that man should form part of God's plans (counsel). In other words: Read what is written, believe what is written, and you have what is written! God offers His grace, but that grace must be accepted in faith.

Jude 9
Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

Jude presents Michael the archangel as the chief (highest) angel, who contended with the devil over the body of Moses. The central point is not the dispute itself, but Michael's conduct: even though he won the conflict (Moses later appeared in his glorified body at the transfiguration, Luke 9:30), Michael did not pronounce judgement or bring a railing accusation against Satan. Instead, he submitted the matter entirely to the Lord, saying: "The Lord rebuke thee.
"Key Teachings:

- Michael's Humility and Submission
  Michael recognised his position and did not overstep his authority. At the time of Moses' death, Satan had not yet been defeated at the cross. Satan still held a high rank as the covering cherub (Ezekiel 28:14) and prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). Michael, though victorious, treated Satan with a measure of respect due to his then-superior position and left all judgement to the Lord.
- "The Lord Rebuke Thee" – A Quotation
  The phrase is taken directly from Zechariah 3:2

And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?
In Zechariah, the LORD (Jehovah) speaks as the angel of the LORD—the same Person appearing in a lower, angelic capacity. This shows the Lord Jesus Christ (the angel of the LORD) speaking in a humbled position while still being Jehovah. The same pattern applies in Jude 9: Michael is the Lord Jesus Christ appearing in the capacity of "archangel" (chief angel/messenger), a lower position than His full divine glory.

- Michael = The Lord Jesus Christ
  Michael ("Who is like God?") is one of the many names/titles of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the express image and brightness of God's glory (Hebrews 1:3), the only One truly like God.
  - He is the Prince over Israel (Daniel 12:1), the true Prince of the people of God.
  - The name "Michael" is used specifically in relation to Israel, not the Church.
  - In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the Lord descends "with the voice of the archangel" — the same Person, unnamed here because the passage concerns the Church, not Israel.
  - In Revelation 12:7, Michael and his angels fight the dragon (Satan) — the same exalted Christ leading His angels against Satan in the future conflict.
- Historical and Future Context
  When Michael contended for Moses' body, Christ had not yet been exalted above every principality (Ephesians 1:20–21). He appeared in a humbled form (as angel/archangel). After His resurrection and ascension, He sits far above all powers. In the future, as Michael, He will stand up (Daniel 12:1) and cast Satan out of heaven (Revelation 12:7–9).
  Moses' body was necessary for Israel's future repentance and deliverance (Moses as a type of the coming Prophet like himself, Deuteronomy 18:15–18; Moses and Elijah as the two witnesses, Revelation 11). Michael (Christ) secured it.

It teaches us humility, proper recognition of authority, and leaving judgement to the Lord. It also reveals that Michael is not a separate angel but the Lord Himself in His role as chief messenger and Prince over Israel. The believer is called to imitate this submission, trusting the exalted Christ who will one day fully execute judgement and deliver His people.

"Archangel" is an untranslated Greek word (archangelos), meaning "chief angel." It is the highest/most important angel. There is only one archangel. Michael contended with the devil about the body of Moses. This is not the main point of this verse. The most important thing is that Michael pronounced no judgment. He left the judgment to the Lord. This conflict between Michael and the devil was won by Michael. We know this for certain because Moses was seen with a body on the mount of transfiguration (Luke 9:30, 33). Michael pronounced no judgment. The

position the devil held at that moment he retained. Michael changed nothing about that position. We have little respect for Satan because we know him as the defeated one. The head of the serpent (Satan) has been crushed. In the days when Moses died he had not yet been defeated. It was already certain that he would be defeated, but that victory had not yet been accomplished. That is why Satan was (still) treated with a certain respect, as the covering cherub (Ezekiel 28:14). At present Satan has not yet been cast out of heaven. That happens only in the future (Revelation 12:7–9). Satan is still the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), even though he has suffered defeat. The consequence of that defeat is that he will be cast out of heaven. The King, Christ Jesus, has long been placed above him. In the time when Michael contended for the body of Moses, Satan had not yet been defeated. Therefore Michael said: “The Lord rebuke thee.”

Michael is the archangel. “Archangel” means “chief angel.” Michael is the prince of the angels over Israel (Daniel 12:1). Israel is the first among the nations. Israel is the first/highest people. Michael is the prince over Israel. The true Prince over Israel is Jesus Christ, the Son of David. The Lord Jesus Christ is of course not under Michael, for He is far above the angels (Hebrews 1:4, 6; compare Psalm 8:5–7). The Lord Himself is described as “the angel of the LORD.” God, who is invisible, manifests Himself as part of a world lower than Himself. God reveals Himself as (in the capacity of) “angel.” The angel of the LORD is the Lord Himself (Exodus 3:2, 4, 7). Michael is the chief angel. The angel of the LORD is the chief angel, for the Lord is the Highest. He is God in a form recognisable in this creation. This means that the name Michael is given to the angel of the LORD and therefore to the Lord Himself. The only thing that can be objected to this is the words Michael speaks here: “The Lord rebuke thee.” In the explanation of Jude 9 I said that Michael did not Himself pronounce judgment but left the judgment to the Lord. If Michael and the Lord are one and the same Person, that seems contradictory, but it is not, for the expression “The Lord rebuke thee” is taken from the Old Testament.

> Zechariah 3:1–2
> 1 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.
> 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

Joshua was the high priest at the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity. Joshua is the Hebrew form of the name “Jesus.” This Joshua is a type of the Lord Jesus. In Zechariah 3:1 “the angel of the LORD” is first mentioned. Joshua stood before the angel of the LORD. Beside him stands Satan, who wants to tempt/resist Joshua (the Lord Jesus). In Zechariah 3:2 the LORD (Jehovah) takes the word. That LORD is the same as the angel of the LORD. There are in fact three present here. Joshua and Satan are obviously not designated by “the LORD,” so the LORD can only be the angel of the LORD. “The angel of the LORD” can also be understood as “the angel, namely the LORD” or “the angel Jehovah.” This means that the

LORD (Jehovah) appears as angel. The Lord says here: “The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee.” This utterance is quoted in Jude 9. Why did He not say: “I rebuke thee”? The Lord who spoke these words appeared in the form of “angel” and therefore in a lower position than that of God Himself. In the position of “angel” He stood under Satan. In the capacity of Jehovah He stood above Satan. The rest of Zechariah 3 shows that this is not about Jehovah in the days of the Old Testament. It concerns the glorified Christ who has received the Name above every name (Philippians 2:9). It therefore concerns the Lord in the days of the New Testament. For God has made Jesus (Joshua) both Lord (Jehovah) and Christ (Acts 2:36). That Lord would rebuke Satan. The Lord in the form of “angel” says: “The LORD rebuke thee.” The Lord Jesus was made lower than the angels (Psalm 8:6; Hebrews 2:7). The Lord who would rebuke Satan is therefore the highest. Below Him stands the Lord in the form of “angel.” In a still lower position stands Joshua (Jesus), namely the Lord Jesus who was made lower than the angels because He became man. He was tempted by Satan (Luke 4:1–13). The high invisible God has taken on a lower capacity. In that capacity He appeared as angel, because that is what He is. He did not disguise Himself! He appeared as man, was born of a woman, and was man. These different capacities must sometimes be kept distinct. They are sometimes placed alongside one another and then compared.

Christ sits at the right hand of God, far above every principality, power, might, dominion, and name (Ephesians 1:20–21). “Right hand” indicates that unity has been established. Most people place Satan on the left. “Left” is the opposite of “right,” but “right” is not the opposite of “left.” One can speak of “right” without there being any “left.” In our dualistic world that is not possible. With God there is “right” without there being any “left.” An example of this is found in:

> Psalm 110:1–5
> 1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
> 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
> 3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.
> 4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.
> 5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

“LORD” in Psalm 110:1 is the translation of “Jehovah.” In the KJV it is always written entirely in capitals. “Lord” with ordinary letters is the translation of the Hebrew word adon. In Hebrew there is also the word adonai, which is likewise translated “Lord.” In Psalm 110:1 it is said that “Adon” sits at the right hand of Jehovah, while in Psalm 110:5 it is said that Jehovah is at the right hand of “Adon.” It is always right, because it indicates unity/oneness. “Right” or “right hand” (Hebrew: yamin) is derived from min, meaning “of the same kind.” In Genesis 1 it is

translated “after his kind” (Genesis 1:12, 21, 24–25). “Sit at my right hand” means: “We are of the same kind,” “We belong together.” The Lord Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God (among other places, Hebrews 10:12). People make a “picture” of this and place God at the left hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is incorrect and impossible. The Lord Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God, which means He is God and sits on the throne of God. With God there is no left. In Zechariah 3:1 it is said that Satan stands at the right hand of Joshua. This means that in a certain way they are one. Joshua is a type of the Lord Jesus who as man formed part of the material world directly connected with Satan. That is why it says Satan stood at the right hand of Joshua.

Michael means “Who is like God?” The Lord Jesus Christ is the express image of God’s person and the brightness of His glory (Hebrews 1:3). God is a Person/Being, and the Lord Jesus Christ is His express image. God is Light (1 John 1:5), and the Lord Jesus Christ is the brightness of that Light. He is therefore God’s image and God’s likeness. He is the first Man who is that! There is only One who is like God: namely the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ has many dozens of names and titles. Michael is one of those names. Michael will rise in the future. At present He sits on the throne, for He is the Prince. He is like God and therefore sits on the throne of God (Matthew 23:22; Hebrews 12:2). Especially Jews who come to faith draw the right conclusions. They conclude that Melchisedec is the Messiah. They conclude that Michael is the Messiah. From the Word of God these conclusions are perfectly correct. Christians come to such conclusions with far more difficulty because they must first be freed from their theological baggage. If the Lord Jesus Christ sits on the throne, it is unthinkable that there should be an angel-prince above Him and below His heavenly Father. If Michael were not the same as the Lord Jesus Christ, he would stand between God and the Lord Jesus Christ. That is impossible, which means that Michael is the same as the Lord Jesus Christ. Michael is then mentioned in Jude 9. He is mentioned for the last time in:

> Revelation 12:7
> And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

This refers to the same moment as in Daniel 12:1

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Michael stands at the head of His angels. The dragon (Satan; Revelation 12:9)

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

stands at the head of a legion of angels. They are each other’s adversaries. The adversary of Satan is Christ, the exalted Serpent (John 3:14)

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

namely: Michael. This Name is therefore here the designation of the heavenly Prince over earthly Israel. The name Michael is used only in connection with His relation to Israel. In connection with the Church or with the nations of the earth this Name is never used. In Revelation 12 it concerns Israel (the woman), who gives birth to a male child (the Church; Revelation 12:5). The male child is caught up unto God and to His throne. This is a description of the rapture of the Church (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). The woman will flee into the wilderness. This points to the believing remnant of Israel, which will flee into the wilderness before the great tribulation breaks out. During the second half of the seventieth week of Daniel 9:24–27 she will be preserved in the wilderness. Revelation 12 speaks of events that will take place around the seventieth week. The Church is caught up unto God and to His throne, after which there is war in heaven. On that occasion Michael will stand up (Daniel 12:1). The Lord Jesus Christ now sits at the right hand of God. When the history for Israel continues, He will stand up.

Michael is the archangel. He is mentioned once more in:

> 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18
> 13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.
> 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.
> 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.
> 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
> 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
> 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The archangel is not named here because this passage is not about Israel. It concerns the rapture of the Church. The normal fulfilment of the prophecy is that the Lord will in the future gather Israel out of the Gentiles. He will bring her into the promised fatherland (Canaan). The special fulfilment of the prophecy is that the Lord will gather the Church out of the Gentiles. He will bring the Church into the promised Fatherland (heaven). When the believers of the Church receive the coming redemption—namely the redemption of their body (Romans 8:23)—this will happen through the same archangel. He is called Michael, but the believers of the Church know Him under a different Name. By using the term “archangel,” a connection is made with the prophecies concerning Israel. The name Michael is omitted to indicate that it is not about Israel. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 it is stated that the Lord Himself will descend with a shout. He is the good Shepherd (John 10:11), and the sheep (the

believers) hear His voice (John 10:3–4). They will be where He is (John 14:3). The Lord calls; the voice of the archangel will sound. The Lord is the archangel. He is the Messenger and the King. The Hebrew word for “king” is melek. This word is related to mal’ak, which means “angel” or “messenger.” The king was supposed to be a messenger. He was to convey the message (the Word of God) to the people over whom he was appointed. The Lord is both the King and the Messenger. He is the Word of God and at the same time the King appointed by God. The Lord Himself will descend, with the voice of the archangel. This is the same as “with the trump of God” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Shout, voice, and trump are here synonyms. It concerns the sound that is produced, namely the message that is proclaimed. Something is trumpeted. They are all synonyms:

The Lord will shout
The archangel will sound His voice
God will sound the trumpet

This is a threefold parallelism. The Lord Himself is the archangel, namely God. The archangel is mentioned because this first of all refers to the Epistle of Jude. Through the Epistle of Jude reference is made to the Book of Daniel, where Michael is mentioned in connection with the deliverance of Israel (Daniel 12:1). The prophecy of the deliverance of Israel is also applied to the Church. Israel does not know who the Lord is, but the believers of the present dispensation do know. Israel does not know who Michael is, but the believers of the present dispensation do know. Israel thinks there are several archangels. The believers of the present dispensation can know that there is only one archangel. He is the Word of God, the true Manna, the true Messenger/Angel, and the true King who will deliver not only Israel, but also the believers of the present (fifth) dispensation.

Michael—the archangel—is therefore the Lord in the capacity of angel. That is a stage lower than His divine capacity. He contended with the devil for possession of the body of Moses (Jude 9). How that conflict turned out is not known. Yet the conflict was real. The Lord is called Michael here because the body of Moses is necessary in relation to the future repentance/deliverance of Israel. The new covenant comes according to the pattern of the old covenant. In the first deliverance of Israel, Moses played an important role. In the final deliverance of Israel a prophet like Moses will appear (Deuteronomy 18:15–18). This prophecy applies first of all to the Lord Himself. A prophet like Moses is obviously also Moses himself. Whoever does not listen to that prophet will be destroyed. Moses will appear in the future, together with Elijah (the two witnesses; Revelation 11:3–6). Moses had the power to turn water into blood, and Elijah had the power to withhold rain (Revelation 11:6). Moreover, Moses and Elijah were seen on the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:4; Luke 9:33).

Michael contended for the body of Moses. He was in a humble position and at that time was not yet above every principality and power, for otherwise He would not have had to contend for the body of Moses.

John 17:4–5

> 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.
> 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

The Lord asked the Father to glorify Him with a glory He had before the world was. The Lord does not say: “the glory I had before I became man.” The Lord therefore lost glory when this world came into being. That did not happen at His incarnation, but much earlier. The Lord lost glory when He made the old fallen world (of Genesis 1:2) into what it now is. It was a restoration of something that was in fact impossible to restore. It was not an honourable (glorious) matter. On the contrary! When the Lord accomplished the re-creation (from Genesis 1:3 onwards) it was no honourable matter for Him Himself. That world which had been judged by God Himself was “restored” by Him Himself, which was not honourable for Him. When He restored the world, He went along with that world so that the sinful world might yet be brought back to God. That came at the expense of the Lord Jesus, who bore the responsibility for it. On that basis He Himself had to bear the penalty of sin at the cross of Golgotha.
God brought this world into being out of a fallen world. The same God also made Himself responsible for this world. By doing so He gave up glory, because He defiled Himself with the impurity of this world. Therefore, He Himself had to be cleansed and received a new garment (Zechariah 3:3–5). The work of the seven days was very pleasant for present-day mankind, but not at all for the Lord Himself. He in fact thereby defiled Himself.

> 1 Timothy 2:13–14
> 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
> 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

From this we rightly conclude that Eve was deceived and that Adam afterwards chose Eve’s side. He took her part and went along with her. He did not do this because it was such a wise decision, but because he is a picture of the Lord Jesus. The Lord took pity on the creation so that He might bring that creation back to God. This is of course only half the story, for whoever rejects His offering goes to destruction. The Lord bore the penalty in our place. That was possible only because He had made Himself responsible. This, however, places upon us the responsibility to accept that offering and to live from it. The Lord is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Before the earth became waste and void (in Genesis 1:2), God had His plan ready concerning the Lamb as a burnt offering. The Lamb came to do His will (Hebrews 10:7–9). When the Lord appeared, He was the humbled Lord. The Lord looked upon the world and bound Himself to the world. He was born of woman, in likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3) so that sin might be condemned in His flesh. When the Lord appeared in Old Testament times, He was not glorified, but humbled. He was indeed higher than man, but from God’s perspective He was humbled. Jehovah is therefore the Name of God in humiliation. From this low position He waged war with the devil (the thrower-through). From that position He dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil

(Jude 9). In the future He will indeed bring judgment. That, however, will not be from a humbled position, but precisely from an exalted position. In Old Testament times Satan was the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4), the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). In New Testament times he still is, in a sense, yet since the resurrection we know the Lord who is placed above him. The Lord, however, does not demonstrate this in practice, for Satan still acts as the god of this age and the prince of the power of the air. Only in the future will the judgment upon Satan be executed and will he be cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7–9).
When Michael and the devil contended for the body of Moses, Satan was in rank actually higher than Michael. Michael dared not bring a railing accusation, because the inferior does not rail against or judge the superior. He knew His place and held to it. We find this thought throughout all the Pauline epistles. The believer ought not to be wise above that which he ought to be wise (Romans 12:3). The believer ought not now to reign (1 Corinthians 4:8). The believers will reign, but that lies in the future. Now they are “the offscouring of all things” (1 Corinthians 4:13). Everyone ought to submit to the powers that are above them (Romans 13:1). This is written especially to believers. As long as believers are on earth, they are subject to human government, for it stands above them.
Jude 9 is a quotation from:
Zechariah 3:2
And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?
From this verse it is evident that Michael is the Lord! Through the resurrection He has been placed far above every principality, power, might, dominion, and name (Ephesians 1:20–21). In the future Michael will stand up and fight against the dragon (Satan). On that occasion Satan will be cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7–9). This did not happen in the past, for that was under the old covenant. In the future the conflict will take place under the new covenant and it will happen. This conflict undoubtedly took place under the old covenant. This is evident from the fact that Moses appeared in his (glorified) body on the mount of transfiguration, which took place under the old covenant. From this it may be concluded that the Lord has an interest in the bodies of men. When there are bodies of believers in the resurrection, those bodies will rise. This is not because God needs those bodies, but because Scripture shows that God does it that way. If there is no body, then God does not need it either. There was contention for the body of Moses. The only logical conclusion to be drawn from this is that Moses rose on that occasion. The Lord is not a Keeper of dead bodies. Moses is neither on earth nor in the realm of the dead, for in that case his body could have remained in the grave. This means he is in heaven. The same applies then to Elijah, though he did not even die. He went directly to heaven, which is most remarkable. Both are exceptions to the rule.

Jude 12–13
12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;
13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

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These verses sharply contrast the useless, destructive, and doomed nature of the ungodly with the life, stability, and eternal hope of believers. The ungodly infiltrate, defile fellowship, promise much but deliver nothing, rage without purpose, and wander toward certain eternal darkness. Believers must recognise them, separate from their influence, and hold fast to the only Sovereign — the Lord Jesus Christ — who gives true rest, fruitfulness, and an incorruptible kingdom. The warning is severe: their end is the second death, reserved for ever in outer darkness.

There are 5 Striking Images

1. Spots in your feasts of charity
    - They are blemishes (spots, stains) in the love-feasts (fellowship meals) of believers.
    - They join the fellowship but only to feed themselves without fear — selfishly, boldly, without reverence or concern for the holiness of the gathering.
    - They abuse the liberty and hospitality of believers for personal gain, disturbing and defiling true fellowship.
2. Clouds without water, carried about of winds
    - They appear promising (like clouds that should bring rain), but are empty — they bring no life, no blessing, no Word of God.
    - They are unstable, tossed about by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14), lacking any firm root in truth.
3. Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots
    - They are barren, fruitless trees — promising life but producing nothing of value.
    - “Twice dead” emphasises their complete spiritual lifelessness: already dead in sins through Christ’s death (the first death), and destined for the second death (eternal judgement; Revelation 20:14).
    - They are uprooted — no hope of recovery or fruitfulness.

Verse 13 – Two More Images of Chaos and Doom

4. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame
    - The sea represents the restless, turbulent nations (Revelation 17:15; Psalm 2:1–3).
    - These men are like uncontrollable, violent waves — full of energy and noise, but producing only foam (their own shame, pride, and perishable glory).
    - Their raging is futile: it wastes energy, achieves nothing constructive, and ends in destruction.
5. Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever
    - Stars are fixed and reliable guides, but these are wandering (unstable, deceptive).
    - They appear to lead but cause men to stray.
    - Their destiny is the blackness of darkness for ever — outer darkness, eternal separation from God, the final judgement of the ungodly.

These two verses describe Cain, Balaam, and Korah and obviously also of those who think and act as they did. “These are spots in your feasts of charity…” A feast is a picture of fellowship. “Charity” (love) is likewise. They are spots, which indicates that they defile the fellowship. They do not belong in it. Believers have nothing to do with them and ought to keep far from them. Scripture teaches that the believer ought to keep far from those who do not submit to the Word of God and to the dominion of Christ. Believers ought to keep far from those who do not acknowledge Christ as the only Sovereign. Those who reject Him have other things that reign in their lives. It does not say that believers ought to keep them far from themselves. It says that believers ought to keep themselves far from them! Believers do not cast someone out of the church, but they themselves step out. The believer has the responsibility to acknowledge the Lord and to live in fellowship with Him. No one else is involved in that responsibility. If he is hindered in it, he ought to withdraw from that hindrance (compare, for example, 1 Corinthians 5). This means that in his daily life he keeps far from them. When they feast with believers, they feed themselves without fear. When they have fellowship with believers, they do so only for themselves. When a believer is in fellowship somewhere, it is not merely for himself, but precisely for the sake of the other. For the believer himself it is not necessary, but he does it especially for the sake of the other with whom he enters into fellowship. These people, who do not acknowledge the only Sovereign, do not feed the other but themselves. They do so without fear, namely unhindered and unrestrained. They do it with all boldness and insolence. They come only for themselves and in practice they have crept in (Jude 4) because they want to take advantage of the liberty and also of the hospitality of the believer. For the believer this is no evil thing, for when he gives something, he does it “as unto the Lord.” Wherever there is liberty, that liberty is always abused by those who are after their own advantage. They thereby disturb the fellowship and thereby they blaspheme (Jude 10).“…

clouds they are without water, carried about of winds…" One looks to see whether a cloud is coming, for a cloud brings rain. If clouds bring no rain, they had better not have been there. Waterless clouds are empty vessels. They are carried about by the winds. These are the same winds as the wind mentioned in:

> Ephesians 4:14
> That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

"Wind of doctrine" is doctrinal wind/current. By those currents they are carried about. This also happened with Cain. He was driven in all directions except the good one. He was continually wandering. Within evangelical Netherlands the same thing occurs. In the course of the years all kinds of currents arise. Always something "new" raises its head, though it never proves to be anything new. Everyone must urgently follow it, but it leads to nothing. When one thing is over, something else comes, whereby everyone is "blown" in another direction. In the world the same principle naturally applies. Always something "new" comes whereby mankind is driven forward. There is never rest. People keep busy with it until it goes out of fashion, after which something else takes its place. They are only things that set man in motion and keep him in motion. Those who "devise" them do so only for their own advantage. The only foothold for man is the Word of God. That is very firm and moreover living and eternally abiding (1 Peter 1:23, 25). The content of the Bible never changes. It is timeless and unchangeable. The Bible does not adapt itself to man's circumstances. The curse under which man lives is that he lives in darkness and absolutely does not know where he is going. He seeks wherein he is imprisoned, but he never comes out of it. Man is kept busy with all kinds of things, but those are not the important, essential things. Such people are around the believers; not only in an unbelieving world, but also within Christian communities. Peter speaks about this latter phenomenon:

> 2 Peter 2:13–19
> 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;
> 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:
> 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;
> 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.
> 17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.
> 18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that

were clean escaped from them who live in error.
19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Peter here uses almost the same words, but he speaks not of unbelievers, but of believers. Such things have even crept into the Christian community.“…trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;” In autumn the leaves fall from the trees. They are unfruitful trees that are even uprooted by the autumn storms. Nothing remains of them. The first part of Jude 12 corresponds to 2 Peter 2:13. The second part of Jude 12 corresponds to 2 Peter 2:17. “Waterless clouds” correspond to “wells without water.” Both texts speak of a certain judgment. In Jude 12 it is said that they are twice dead. In 2 Peter 2:17 it is said that the mist of darkness is reserved for ever for these persons. It does not speak of dying and certainly not of dying twice. For that is not possible. A believer has died once, and that he lives, he lives unto God (Romans 6:10). His works will be burned, but he himself will be saved. He cannot die twice.

Jude 12 speaks of unbelieving mankind. They are already dead through the death of the Lord Jesus. Judgment has in principle come upon the world. Man has rejected the life that was brought into being since His death, and therefore their end is the second death (Revelation 20:14)
And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Some people completely turn this verse around. They say: “A believer has already died and come to life again. If he lives ungodly, he dies a second time.” This is impossible! A believer never comes into the second death! Jude is not speaking about believers, but about unbelievers. The end of the unbeliever is the second death. “They are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame…” This is an ancient biblical image. The sea is a picture of the nations (among other places, Revelation 17:15
And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

The nations rage:

Psalm 2:1–3
1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,
3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

It concerns untameable forces of the sea that must be subdued. Why do the seas rage? What purpose does it serve? They rage on. That is how the world is. Enormous amounts of energy are wasted, but it leads to nothing. Man is busy with all sorts of things, but they have no constructive function. Moreover, it is not relaxing at all. Most people—and sadly many believers too—occupy themselves with things that lead nowhere. It is the working of sin and leads to destruction. Man tries to pull everyone down, for if everyone has fallen, he is the only one still standing. That is what man does by nature. A man (even a believer) may enjoy life (1 Timothy 6:17). The believer ought, of course, to be directed toward the building up

of the Church, for that is to the glory of God. It is intended that the believer should live from the rest that Christ gives. He ought to conform to the position God has given him in Christ. In that position he ought to find his rest. He ought then to live in expectation of the righteous judgment of God. God has said:

> Deuteronomy 32:35
> To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.
> Romans 12:19
> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
> Hebrews 10:30
> For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

This is the negative side. There is also a positive side. If the believer serves the Lord, he will receive reward from Him. That is how the believer ought to live, for that distinguishes him from the world. The world holds all kinds of things before him, and often believers do the same. Those things generally have nothing to do with the Word of God. They have to do with the way of Cain (jealousy and self-willed religion), the error of Balaam (making compromise with the world), and the gainsaying of Korah (rebellion against the only true Sovereign). The believer ought to learn to know the rest that God has already given him. He needs only to take the place God shows him: in grace and in liberty. He ought to remain standing there, despite all the things moving/happening around him. The believer is built upon the Rock that does not waver. Everything in the world changes, but it leads to nothing. Therefore, the believer ought to hold fast to the only Sovereign, the Lord Jesus Christ. To Him he must give account. The Epistle of Jude is for the instruction of the believer. Through it he can learn to understand how the world is put together, so that he may recognise it and in time separate himself from it. It is not in accordance with his position, and therefore he ought not to involve himself with it.

Raging waves of the sea foam out their own shame. This means they are even proud of it. The foam crest on the waves is a picture of a (perishable) crown. “…wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” Stars are very reliable. Yet they prove to be wandering stars. One cannot rely on them. It seems as if they are in one place, but they prove to be elsewhere and very unreliable. It seems as if they show the way, but they cause one to wander. For those wandering stars the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever. This is not only the designation for the final judgment, but it is also the description of the world in which we live. The world lives in darkness. Only through faith in the risen Christ does one pass from that darkness into the light (Ephesians 5:8). Through faith one passes from death into life. The wandering stars do not know where they are going. The believer does know: it leads to nothing. Their destination is outer darkness. The wandering stars are busy with temporal

things and are tossed to and fro with temporal things. The believer has a different destination. He has received an incorruptible kingdom. He knows that the world wavers, but he has a Lord who does not waver. He is united with that living, unshakeable Lord. From that he is expected to live. That is also the great difference between the believer and the world. He has received something timeless: the only Sovereign, whose glory will be revealed in the future. Then He will bring His judgment upon the ungodly world, but He comes first to take the believers home; in accordance with His unshakeable Word.

Jude 14–15
14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,
15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Jude shifts from past judgements (vv. 5–13) to the future, final judgement on the last day, quoting a prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who “walked with God” and was taken by Him so that he was not found (Genesis 5:24).

- Enoch as a Type
    - Enoch is the seventh from Adam, picturing the end of the seventh dispensation (the thousand years).
    - His being taken without seeing death foreshadows:
        - The rapture of the Church at the end of the fifth dispensation.
        - The final removal of the old creation on the last day, when believers are taken to the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 20:11; 21:1).
    - The remnant is always preserved before judgement (Lot before Sodom, Noah before the flood, the Church before the great tribulation).
- The Prophecy of Enoch
    - “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints” — Christ returns with His holy ones (believers) to execute judgement.
    - This is not the rapture (believers are taken to Christ), nor the great tribulation, but the completion of God’s judgement on the last day.
    - The Lord comes to:
        - Execute judgement upon all — the final, universal judgement.
        - Convince all the ungodly of their ungodly deeds and hard (blasphemous) speeches spoken against Him.
    - The emphasis is on their ungodly words — gainsaying, blasphemy, and rebellion against God and His Anointed (Psalm

2:2–3; Daniel 7:25). This ultimately traces back to Satan, the great adversary and father of lies (John 8:44).

- Connection to the Epistle
  - “These” refers to the ungodly men of v. 4 (and those described in vv. 8–13) — the same kind of people Enoch prophesied about.
  - All past judgements (Israel in the wilderness, fallen angels, Sodom) are foreshadowings of this final judgement.
  - The judgement at the cross began the process (the world was judged there), but its full outworking is delayed in this age of grace. It will be completed on the last day.
- Contrast with the Believer
  - The ungodly are gainsayers who speak against God.
  - Believers are called to submit to the Word, endure the contradiction of sinners (Hebrews 12:3), and strive against unbelief (not sin in the flesh), looking to Jesus who endured the cross and the gainsaying of sinners (Hebrews 12:2–4).
  - The believer has not yet resisted unto blood in this struggle — unlike the Lord — but must continue contending for the faith.

Enoch’s prophecy declares the certain, future coming of the Lord with His saints to execute complete judgement on all the ungodly — their deeds and especially their blasphemous words against Him. This final judgement on the last day is the climax of all previous judgements and the outworking of the cross. The ungodly men of Jude’s day (and all like them) are under this sentence. Believers, in contrast, are called to endure, submit, and live by faith, knowing that judgement is coming — but they themselves are delivered from it. The warning is severe: the Lord will come, and the ungodly will face the full weight of their rebellion.

In the preceding verses judgment has continually been spoken of that took place in the past. From Jude 14 onwards a future judgment is spoken of. The judgments of the past are all foreshadowings of the judgment that will come in the future. We have already discussed this in connection with Jude 7. “These” refers back to the “certain men” from Jude 4. It obviously also refers to the persons described as spots, waterless clouds, raging waves, and so on (from Jude 12–13). Of them Enoch prophesied. He is the seventh from Adam. Of Enoch it is said in:

> Genesis 5:21–24
> 21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:
> 22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:
> 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:
> 24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

God took him, and no place was found for him any more (compare Revelation 20:11). The taking of Enoch is first of all a type of what God will do at the end of the seventh dispensation (on the last day) with this world. It obviously also points to the rapture of the Church. The judgment of the

last day had a foreshadowing in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, but Lot was first taken out of it. This can prophetically be applied to the end of the fifth dispensation. At the end of the fifth dispensation the believers are taken away before the approaching judgment. This happens through the rapture of the Church. On the last day the same thing happens. Then the whole old creation perishes, but the believers are taken away before that judgment to live on the new earth. The remnant is always preserved/saved. This principle runs through all dispensations. Enoch is a picture of what will come on the last day. Enoch walked with God, which is a picture of the seventh dispensation. Mankind in general will walk with God in the seventh dispensation (during the thousand years). It culminates in the moment when God takes that mankind out of the old creation. It can also be stated the other way round: God takes away the old creation, after which only the new creation remains:

> Revelation 20:11; 21:1
>
> 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.
>
> 1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Enoch—the seventh—was at a certain moment taken away, because God had taken him. The same will happen, at the end of the seventh dispensation, with the old creation. Enoch prophesied about this, saying: “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them…” From this it is clear that it cannot possibly be about the rapture of the Church. It is not even about the great tribulation. It concerns the full judgment of God (its completion). All the ungodly will be judged. The question ought not to be: When does that begin?, but: When is that completed? When did that judgment begin? That judgment began at the cross. There the world was judged. There it began and it still continues. Its outworking will be completed in the future—on the last day. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the basis and the example of the taking away of the old creation and the manifestation of the new creation. Fundamentally the world has been judged, but God is in no hurry to complete it.The old creation is taken away, which is the normal consequence of the death of the Lord Jesus. There the world was crucified and therefore that world must disappear. The judgment of the last day is a further outworking of the judgment at Golgotha. This means there is no escaping it. God has demonstrated the judgment at Golgotha. The judgment that came upon the Lord Jesus then was dreadful. It is the judgment upon this old creation. Since then the old creation has lost all right to existence. Judgment is not divided here. There is no separate mention of the judgment upon the Lord Jesus at Golgotha, the judgment upon Israel during the great tribulation, nor the judgment upon the remaining nations during the rest of the sixth dispensation (during 33 years). It is not mentioned because that is not the issue here. It concerns a much more general truth: namely, that God will judge everything and

everyone. How He does it, where He does it, and when He does it is mentioned elsewhere. In 2 Peter 3 distinctions are indeed made:

> 2 Peter 3:4–10
> 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.
> 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:
> 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
> 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.
> 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
> 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
> 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

In the second epistle of Peter the general judgment of God upon the whole creation is actually also spoken of (2 Peter 3:7). In the days of the future (Greek: parousia = presence) of the Lord (verse 4) judgment will come. The judgment during the great tribulation belongs to it, but it is not the completion of the judgment. Before judgment begins, two days of a thousand years first pass (verse 8). There are people who think the Lord is slack. The Lord, however, is not slack concerning His promise, but is longsuffering (verse 9). If people reason for themselves, they say the Lord is slack. For the Lord was to come, and that has not yet happened, so He is slack. Baal is slack, but not the Lord (1 Kings 18:1 ff.). The Lord is longsuffering! He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). The day of the Lord (verse 10) begins at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel 9. “The day of the Lord” is a description of the kingdom of Christ. It refers to the seventh day and therefore to the seventh dispensation. It points to the reign of the Lord. The Bible also knows “the day of man” (1 Corinthians 4:3; translated “man’s judgment”). The day of man runs from Adam until the beginning of the kingdom. There man ceases to reign. After that comes the other day: the day of the Lord. Then the Lord will bring His light, Word, Knowledge, and Life into the world. In the day of the Lord the heavens will pass away with a great noise (verse 10). When the heavens pass away with a great noise, the day of the Lord is already more than a thousand years old. It is then no longer about the coming of the Lord, but about His presence. In the days of His presence, during His kingdom, the heavens and the earth will pass away and the elements will burn and (namely) perish. When three believers were cast into the fire, they stood firm (Daniel 3:21 ff.).

This, however, is a miracle that the Lord does only to believers. He does not do it to unbelievers, for they perish. Scoffers say that all things continue as they were (verses 3–4). Peter, however, says that the day of the Lord will come. When the day of the Lord dawns it will be a surprise, for no one expects it any more. That day comes as a thief in the night (verse 10) and the heavens and the earth will pass away.
Peter therefore makes a certain distinction. On the one hand he speaks of the longsuffering of the Lord. On the other hand he speaks of the coming of the day of the Lord. The coming of the day of the Lord points to the sixth dispensation, for during the sixth dispensation the day of the Lord dawns. When the day of the Lord dawns, the kingdom begins. After the seventh dispensation the heavens and earth will perish and the eighth begins, though hardly any distinction is made between the seventh and the eighth. A direct connection is therefore made here between the coming of Christ and the judgment on the last day. Whoever does not pay close attention reads in the epistle of Peter that the coming of the Lord is the same as the last day. That, however, contradicts various other passages of Scripture. The Lord has said that He will (re)come, and therefore it will happen. This was said by Enoch, Peter, and Jude. Of these three, Peter is the one who makes the most distinctions. This is not the most important thing. The most important thing is that judgment is coming!

> 2 Peter 3:13
> Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

In 2 Peter 3:10 it is said that the heavens and the earth will burn and (namely) perish in the day of the Lord. In 2 Peter 3:12 it is said that it happens in the presence of the day of God. From the context it is clear that the passing away of the heavens and the earth takes place in the transition from the day of the Lord to the day of God. In 2 Peter 3:10 the passing away of the heavens and the earth is mentioned for the first time. In 2 Peter 3:12 Peter mentions it again, but then calls it “the day of God” and he leaves out the lead-in from verse 10. He does, however, mention an extension: namely what comes afterwards. After the passing away of the heavens and the earth there come new heavens and a new earth. That is called “the day of God.”This distinction between the day of the Lord and the day of God is, in my view, made only here in 2 Peter 3. The Lord is God. The day of the Lord is therefore also the day of God. The difference in practice is therefore very slight. In the Old Testament other terms are used and no distinction at all is made. There is no difference made between the thousand years (before the last day) and the eternal kingdom (after the last day). For the eternal kingdom after the last day will actually begin more than a thousand years before the last day. The descriptions of the kingdom in the Old Testament are partly descriptions of the thousand years, while another part is emphatically descriptions of what follows after the last day. “Time” is not first in importance. The day of the Lord begins at the end of the seventieth week, at the appearing of the Lord on the Mount of Olives. The day of the Lord officially lasts until the last day, after which the day of the Lord passes into the day of God.

The Bible also speaks of “the day of Christ” or “the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.” The day of Christ points to the period preceding the seventieth week. It therefore points to the end of our (fifth) dispensation. When the Church is manifested before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10), that is called “the day of Christ.” Christ—our Head—will bring His light (day and therefore “judgment”) upon our lives. We are summoned in the day of Christ.

Seven years later the day of the Lord begins. The name “LORD” (Jehovah) is always first of all connected with Israel. The day of the Lord therefore begins when the Lord brings His judgment upon Israel (at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel 9). For Israel that is the end of the sixth dispensation. At the end of the sixth dispensation (33 years after the end of the seventieth week of Daniel 9) the Lord will reign over all the nations of the earth and the day of the Lord will have come also upon the other nations. Then the thousand years begin. After the last day the day of God begins. Then God is all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). In Ephesians 1:23 it is said that Christ fills all in all. This relates only to the Church, the Body of Christ. “All” in Ephesians 1:23 is limited to all who belong to the Church. Peter applies the matters in 2 Peter 3 with regard to the Church. The Lord is now longsuffering (verse 9). Judgment will, however, come. We think thereby of the coming of Christ, but Peter thought of the overthrow of the world in the past (2 Peter 3:5–6; Genesis 1:2). Since then God has been longsuffering over this world. That line of God’s longsuffering does not end at the coming of Christ, but on the last day.

Jude in his epistle speaks of the definitive judgment that will take place after the seventh dispensation. It concerns the general judgment on the last day, of which Enoch is a picture and about which he prophesied. Nowhere in the Bible do we find a prophecy of Enoch. It is not stated here in Jude that Enoch wrote anything, though he probably did. There is indeed a book of Enoch, but it does not belong to the canon of the Bible. The book of Enoch also does not belong to the official apocryphal books. There is a book of Enoch, but that book was probably written in the time of the Maccabees. The Bible states here that Enoch prophesied and therefore he did prophesy. Jude knew this, just as he knew that Michael contended for the body of Moses. There was therefore much more known than is written in the Bible! This is evident, for example, also from:

> 1 Peter 1:10–12
> 10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:
> 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.
> 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

The prophets did not understand their own prophecies (verse 10). Therefore, it was revealed to them that they ministered not unto themselves, but unto us (verse 12). It was therefore revealed to the

prophets that their prophecies applied to the time of the mystery. They knew things that were later revealed to Paul. Paul, however, was the first to write these things down. This was revealed to the prophets, but they did not write it down. The hidden things were therefore always made known to those who earnestly sought them. This stands apart from dispensations.

In Jude 15 it is said that judgment will come upon all the ungodly, their ungodly deeds, and their ungodly words. The emphasis is obviously on their ungodly words, for “speaking” is the most ungodly thing a man does; speaking great words against God, the Most High (compare Daniel 7:25) or: speaking against the LORD and His Anointed (Psalm 2:2–3). It always concerns gainsayers. Gainsaying is an expression of unbelief: God speaks and man speaks against. With this we have immediately arrived at the end times, for Daniel 7:25 speaks of the beast (Revelation 13). It actually points to Satan, for he is the gainsayer. Everything Satan speaks is gainsaying. The conflict of the believer is directed precisely at the speaking of the gainsayer. At the final judgment on the last day the gainsayer—the Satan—will be judged. The word “Satan” means “adversary.” He is the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan deceives and brings false accusations (compare Revelation 12:10). He always speaks against the truth. Gainsayers have nothing to say and therefore they speak against. They are against everything, but as soon as they themselves have to bear responsibility they are gone, for they themselves have nothing. They have no other life-content than gainsaying. Believers ought obviously to have a different attitude. The believer ought to let Scripture speak and bow to it, without gainsaying. The ungodly are unbelievers and therefore gainsayers.

> Hebrews 12:2–4
> 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
> 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.
> 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

The consequence of the gainsaying of sinners was the cross (verse 2). The Lord endured both the cross and the gainsaying of sinners. “Endured” means that He did not yield to it. He bore it and stood firm. The believer ought to take note of this. The believer has not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin (verse 4). We must keep verse 4 within the context of this argument, for otherwise a completely different meaning can be given to it. For “sin” in verse 4 corresponds to “the contradiction of sinners” in verse 3. It is therefore a striving against unbelief. Here it does not say that the believer must strive against sinful deeds or against his own sinful nature. It is a striving against the gainsaying of ungodly sinners against God. Jude speaks of the same gainsaying, which ultimately comes from the ungodly one, Satan. At the coming of Christ that ungodly one will be destroyed. This applies likewise to all ungodly sinners.

Jude 16
These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Jude describes the ungodly men (the “certain men” of v. 4) with four key characteristics, linking their behaviour to the pattern of Israel in the wilderness and to mankind in general since Christ’s death and resurrection:

1. Murmurers
    - They grumble in powerlessness, speaking against God and His ways without any real ground or authority.
    - This directly connects to Israel in the wilderness, who continually murmured against Moses, Aaron, and the LORD (1 Corinthians 10:10).
    - The wilderness pictures the present world — a place of testing and waiting where the Creator is hidden and has “let the world go.”
    - Mankind (especially since the cross) murmurs: “What will become of it all?” — instead of submitting to God’s Word and coming to faith.
2. Complainers
    - They are perpetually dissatisfied with their state and position.
    - The world complains because it is in the wilderness and dislikes it.
    - Believers, by contrast, accept the wilderness as the necessary route to Canaan (the promised land). The destination shapes the present.
3. Walking after their own lusts
    - They follow their own desires rather than the desire of the Lord.
    - Man knows no better and has no other option apart from Christ, so he walks according to his own lusts.
4. Their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage
    - They boast with inflated, empty words (compare 2 Peter 2:18).
    - The old creation can only be puffed up — literally and figuratively — producing nothing of lasting value.
    - They admire people (outward appearance) for selfish advantage, looking at the world with admiration, yet that world will come under judgement and pass away (1 Corinthians 7:31; 1 John 2:17).
    - Only what is in the heart — faith (Romans 10:10) — remains.

Broader Application and Contrast

- The world’s murmuring, complaining, lust-driven life, and empty boasting give no content or direction.
- The only One who gives true content to life is the Lord, the only Sovereign (Jude 4). Apart from Him there is nothing.

- Many reject the Bible as too simple or weak, complicating it to exalt themselves (“Have you got that yet? We have!”).
- The Word of God is never difficult; the believer must submit to it. God is doing everything — reconciling the world unto Himself in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19). Man is expected to say: “That is wonderful. God is doing it!”
- Human philosophy, vain deceit, tradition of men, and rudiments of the world lead nowhere (Colossians 2:8). They focus on the beginning, but the end is Christ — the end of the law (Romans 10:4).
- The believer must be led to Christ, complete in Him (Colossians 2:9–10).

Here the expression “murmurers” is used. This establishes a connection with Israel in the wilderness. Murmuring is “grumbling in powerlessness.” One speaks against while having nothing real to set against it. This is a specific “capacity” of Israel; especially of Israel living in the wilderness (compare 1 Corinthians 10:10). The people murmured against Moses, against Aaron, against the LORD, and so on. The wilderness is a picture of the world in which we live. What Israel did in the wilderness is a picture of what mankind in general does; from the overthrow of the world until the last day, but especially: since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and in expectation of His coming again. The Creator is at present hidden, for He has let the world go. The world murmurs: “What will become of it all?” Nothing will come of it, for that is not the intention at all! The intention is that man should submit to the Word of God and thus come to faith. In other words: not gainsay, but listen! God speaks, and the believer ought to say: “Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3:9). Then there is no room for murmuring. The Lord has arranged everything, and therefore it is well. He will care for the believer, and the believer will be still. It is not a question of whether the believer finds it pleasant or not. The believer is on the way to the promised land, without murmuring.
The world does murmur. It complains about its state, for it is dissatisfied with its position. It is in the wilderness, and about that it is discontented. The believer is not, because he knows that the route to Canaan (the promised land) always goes through the wilderness. The destination determines the present. The Lord, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross and despised the shame (Hebrews 12:2). The result of all this is that He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. God now hides Himself, but will at His time appear and “take up the thread again.” The world is dissatisfied, but the believers are not. The believers have submitted themselves to the Lord, wait with patience, and in the meantime do what is expected of them: believe. The unbeliever always complains, is discontented with his state, is always seeking, but never finds anything. What he could find (namely: Jesus, crowned with glory and honour) he rejects. The world walks after its own lusts. Man knows no better and moreover has nothing else. The only alternative is the desire of the Lord, but men walk according to their own lusts. Their mouth speaks very great swelling words, which is also mentioned in:2 Peter 2:18

For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error;

In the second epistle of Peter it again concerns a community of believers where everything is going wrong. Jude speaks of the world in general. There is enormous boasting, and people reach far too high. The old creation can only be puffed up: literally and figuratively. Nothing comes of the boasting of the world. It also gives no content to life at all. The only One who gives content to life is the Lord, the only Sovereign (Jude 4). Apart from Him there is nothing! What man sets alongside it is puffed up. Man admires persons (the outward appearance) for the sake of advantage. One can look at the world with great admiration, but that world will come under judgment and nothing will remain of it. The fashion (the outward appearance) of this world passes away (1 Corinthians 7:31; 1 John 2:17). What is within may perhaps remain. For man it applies: what is in the heart (namely: faith; Romans 10:10) remains.

Many find the Bible too weak, too childish, or too simple. People make it very difficult themselves, thereby turning it into something no longer understandable. It cannot be grasped. It is so high that man can stretch himself toward it. Thereby man exalts himself (“Have you got that yet? We have!”). The Word of God is never difficult! The believer ought to submit himself to that Word. God is doing everything. God is engaged in a work in which this visible world is involved. He was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). Man is expected to say: “That is wonderful. God is doing it!” If man had to do it, nothing would come of it. Moreover, he cannot do it. God expects man to inform himself about His work (by studying His Word). When he knows what God is doing (or not doing), he ought to submit himself to it. If he does not, he will be excluded from that work. The Colossians thought that the believer had to be improved by teaching, doctrines, and initiated into all kinds of mysteries. That is incorrect. He must come to know Christ! Everything else only leads away from that.

> Colossians 2:8–10
> 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.
> 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.
> 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Philosophy, vain deceit, tradition of men, and rudiments of the world lead nowhere. It is not about the beginning of the world, but precisely about its end. That is Christ. The rudiments of the world is the law (see Galatians 4:3, 9), but the end of the law is Christ (Romans 10:4). The believer must be led to Christ!

Jude 17–19
17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.
19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Key Warning
The greatest error in Bible study is reading a truth into the wrong passage ("in-reading"). One may tell truth but hang it on the wrong Scripture, thereby losing its real meaning. Believers must be alert to this.
Jude's focus is clear: these mockers are natural, unregenerate men who separate themselves from God's work, walk in ungodly lusts, and will ultimately be separated from Him in judgement. Believers, by contrast, remain united with God through faith and submission to His reconciling work in Christ.
Jude urges believers ("beloved") to remember the warnings spoken beforehand by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostles had foretold that in the last time there would be mockers who walk after their own ungodly lusts.

- Mockers are those who take no notice of — and actively belittle — the work of God in Christ.
- They walk according to their own ungodly lusts, meaning God plays no role in their desires, thinking, or actions.
- These mockers separate themselves — they withdraw from the work of God and from His reconciliation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19).
- They are sensual (natural, soulish) and do not have the Spirit — they are unregenerate, natural men without the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Important Distinctions

- Jude speaks of unbelievers in general (natural men without the Spirit).
- 2 Peter 3:3 ("Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts") refers to born-again believers who do not live in accordance with the Word they profess to believe. They fail to submit to the only Sovereign (Christ), though He has bought them (2 Peter 2:1).
- Believers are not separated from God — they are the only ones who remain united with Him through faith.
- Unbelievers separate themselves from God's work of reconciliation. Because they do so, they will ultimately be separated and cast into outer darkness.
- The apostles teach that believers are separated from the world (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 13:13).
- Jude emphasises that the ungodly separate themselves from God (He is the standard). They are the "dividers" — they first depart from the Lord and His Word, then cause division on earth.

Broader Teaching

- God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).
- Those who separate themselves from this reconciliation have no part in it.

- If all runs its normal course, “the all” will be reconciled to God — but the ungodly are not reconciled because they separate themselves.
- The saving grace of God has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11). The responsibility lies with man to submit to it.
- The believer is united with God, His Word, His work, and His Son through faith.
- It is normal for creation to remain united with the Creator. When separation (death) occurred, God did everything to undo it through His Son.
- Everyone who does not separate himself from God’s reconciliation but submits to it has part in it.

Contrast with Believers (1 Corinthians 2:12 – 3:1)

- Believers have received the Spirit of God so they might know the things freely given to them by God (v. 12).
- Not every believer listens to the Spirit. When they do not, they act as natural (soulish) men and cannot understand spiritual things (v. 14).
- The spiritual man discerns all things (v. 15) and has the mind of Christ (v. 16).
- Paul addresses carnal believers as babes in Christ (3:1) — they have the Spirit but do not allow themselves to be taught by Him.
- This is not what Jude is addressing. Jude speaks of unbelievers (natural men without the Spirit), not believers living according to the old nature.

The apostles have obviously said much more than what is stated in verse 18. There will indeed be mockers, but they separate themselves (verse 19). “Mocking” means that they take no notice of the work of God in Christ. They belittle the work of God. They walk after their (own) ungodly lusts. This means that God plays no role in those lusts. God has no place in their thinking and therefore not in their actions either. Mockers are also mentioned in:2 Peter 3:3

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

Peter obviously again speaks of believers. It concerns born-again people who do not live in accordance with the Word in which they say they believe. In the practice of their lives they do not submit to the only Sovereign: Christ (compare 2 Peter 2:1: the Lord has bought them!). We often say that believers are separated from the world. That is true, but here it is actually stated that believers are the only ones who are not separated! Paul teaches with regard to our dispensation that believers are separated (among other places, Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 13:13). Jude teaches that unbelievers separate themselves, because they withdraw from the work of God. They are separated from God, for He is the standard! The ungodly separate themselves and will therefore be separated: they will be removed from the kingdom. It is usually not the believers who separate themselves. It is always the “dividers” who separate themselves. They first depart from the Lord and from His Word and then cause division on earth. When one lets go of the Lord and His

Word, division arises, which then works itself out further within faith communities.
Those who choose against the Lord (unbelievers) will be separated. Believers are the only ones who remain faithful (believe). God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). Those who separate themselves from that reconciliation have no part in that reconciliation. If everything runs its normal course, then “the all” will be reconciled to God. The ungodly (unbelievers) are not reconciled, for they separate themselves. Because they separate themselves, they will ultimately also be separated and cast into outer darkness. The saving grace of God has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11). The responsibility then lies with man himself. He will have to submit himself to that grace of God. If he does not, he separates himself. The believer believes in God, in His Word, in His work, in His Son. He is united with that. It is normal that the creation is united with the Creator and remains so. When someone came who separated the creation from God, God did everything to undo that separation (death) again. In other words: He did everything to reconcile the world unto Himself (to bring it to life). God has done that through His Son. Everyone who does not separate himself from that but submits to it has part in that reconciliation. In Jude it concerns natural men who do not have the Spirit. It therefore does not concern believers who live according to the old nature. That is, for example, described in:

> 1 Corinthians 2:12 – 3:1
> 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
> 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
> 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
> 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.
> 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.
> 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

Here it is emphatically stated that it concerns believers, for they have received the Spirit (verse 12). They have received that Spirit so that they might know the things freely given to them by God. Not every believer (unfortunately) listens to that Spirit. In that case he is a natural (soulish) man and does not understand the things of the Spirit, because he does not want to be taught by the Spirit. Whoever allows himself to be taught by the Spirit is changed in his thinking. A changed thinking results in a changed walk of life. There are believers who withdraw from the work of God in the believer that He wants to do and has promised to do. In that case they also separate themselves. They have indeed accepted the work of God whereby He gives the sinner new life, but beyond that they reject

every work of God in their life. This is not what the epistle of Jude speaks about! One of the greatest mistakes made in Bible study is that people “read into” a biblical truth in the wrong passage of Scripture. They still tell the truth, but they hang it on the wrong Scripture place. Thereby they lose/miss the real meaning of that Scripture place. Without speaking untruth, they take the truth away from the Bible. Believers ought to be alert to this.
“Soul” in the Bible is the designation of the old man. It points to the total man, including his body.

> Genesis 2:7
> And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

“Breath” is the translation of the Hebrew word neshamah. Through the breathing in of the neshamah man became a living soul. God formed man of the dust of the ground, whereby man became a soul. Man is therefore made of the dust of the ground. He only became a living soul when spirit (neshamah) was breathed into him. “Spirit” is synonymous with “life.” The soul itself is made of the dust of the ground. This also applies to the dead soul. The expression “dead soul” is usually translated in the Bible as “dead body.” That soul is not immortal, for the soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). Man therefore does not have a soul, but is a soul. In the epistle of Jude it concerns natural men, namely unbelievers. They do not live from the Spirit, for they do not have the Spirit at all. They simply live according to the old man, who has already been judged at the cross of Golgotha. God therefore does not concern Himself with such people, for by doing so He would deny the work of the Lord Jesus at the cross of Golgotha. One died for all, therefore all died (2 Corinthians 5:15). The good news is that God offers (new) life. Whoever has the Son has life, and whoever does not have the Son does not have life (1 John 5:12). Whoever rejects that life is in judgment (walks in darkness; John 3:18–19) and comes into judgment.
Since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus the position of man has become far worse than before. Until the reconciling work of Christ, God concerned Himself with the world. On occasion God even spoke directly with man who earnestly sought the truth. The man who seeks the truth finds God. In Old Testament times God concerned Himself with the individual man and with the nations of the earth. Since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that has completely ended. Since then God cannot even permit Himself to concern Himself with natural (unregenerate) man. For the old man has officially/juridically been condemned and killed. If God enters into relationship with a man, it can only be through the preaching of the gospel. He does, of course, enter into relationship with a believer.

Jude 20
But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

We believers need to stand firm in a hostile world by being built up on their most holy faith (Christ Himself is the Builder) and by praying in the Holy Ghost (living in dependence on the hidden Christ). The unity of believers is unbreakable — God's work — rooted in the new covenant. Believers must submit to the Word literally, let it change their thinking and walk, and continually remind one another of their oneness in Christ. This is the way to stand firm amid division and opposition.

Key Teachings:

1. Building up yourselves on your most holy faith
    - The believer does not build himself up — Christ Himself is the Builder (the Son).
    - In Hebrew, "builder" (baanah) is almost identical to "son" (ben), which is why the Lord said: "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).
    - The rock is the testimony: Jesus is the Christ, the Son (Builder) of the living God.
    - This applies to:
        - The Church of the present (fifth) dispensation, of which we are part.
        - The future gathered Church (believers from Israel and the nations), built on the same testimony and beginning in literal Petra (the rock fortress in Edom).
    - The present Church is built to be a habitation of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22).
    - Christ is both the Foundation (first Stone) and the chief Cornerstone (last Stone, Capstone; Ephesians 2:20).
    - Believers are living stones — what was different is brought together and joined perfectly into one whole.
    - Example: Temple stones were hewn perfectly in the quarry so they fitted exactly at the site — nothing more needed to be done. This pictures regeneration: through being born again, a person becomes a stone of the spiritual temple. When believers meet, they fit perfectly — no effort needed to "get used to" one another.
    - Problems arise only when believers are dissatisfied with fellow-believers. God has already joined them perfectly. Whoever lives from faith has no issue with other believers.
2. The Sevenfold Unity (Ephesians 4:2–6)
    - one Body — the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22–23)
    - one Spirit — the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9)
    - one hope — Christ is the God of hope (Romans 15:13; Ephesians 4:4)
    - one Lord — Christ is that one Lord (Romans 10:12; Philippians 2:11)
    - one faith — faith in the One: Christ (Acts 20:21); also the faith of Christ (Romans 3:22, 26)
    - one baptism — the baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3–4)

- one God and Father — primarily the God and Father of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3)
- Through this One, believers are one, for He is above all, through all, and in all (Ephesians 4:6).
- Christ is the Head of His body, and the members are one.

3. The Believer's Struggle and Unity
    - The believer has difficulty standing firm in the faith — this is his spiritual conflict (2 Timothy 4:7).
    - Yet this struggle stands apart from the unity that exists between believers, because Christ has made them one in Himself.
    - The believer cannot build himself up — he is built up when he places his faith in Christ.
    - Faith is the starting point and foundation of the believer's thinking (Hebrews 11:1).
    - Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
    - On the basis of faith, things will be given to the believer. He builds his expectation on it — this is the meaning of his existence.
    - Without hope, there is no life. Hope makes one live!
    - The believer lives continually from expectation/hope — as he grows older, his expectations increase, not decrease (Romans 13:11).
4. The Believer's Dependence
    - The believer lives through the Word of God, built on the firm Foundation — Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).
    - Through faith he stands on that Foundation and is built up from it.
    - He believes in the Word written by the Spirit of God — the operative power through which God reveals Himself.
    - Through that Word (Christ) came into being, and through it believers are born again.
    - The believer must not confuse the Spirit's working with his own feelings.
    - Whoever refuses to take the Word literally and believe it will never know God. God works only through His Word.
    - The Word must be taken primarily literally — removing its literal meaning removes the foundation of all Scripture.
    - The Bible is Spirit-breathed, revealing spiritual things, but it stands on a rock-solid, literal foundation.
    - The Lord always appealed to what "is written" (Matthew 4:4, 7).
5. Challenges and Submission
    - Believers may struggle to understand literal meanings of concepts like "faith," "soul," or "hope."
    - The adversary (Satan) has worked to distort these biblical meanings.

- By studying Scripture (comparing Scripture with Scripture), believers learn what the Bible truly means.
- Submission to the Word changes thinking → changed thinking changes walk of life.
- This is a profound, lifelong process — the only way the believer can go.
- Through faith in the Word, he is compelled to this path — he cannot do otherwise.
- A believer ought to be changed by the Word, becoming a stranger and sojourner in the world.
- He is not meant to become eccentric or a “village idiot.”
- Some deliberately seek division or invent their own faith to stand out — that is not the way.
- The only way is humble submission to the Word of God.

6. Most Holy Faith and Prayer in the Holy Ghost
    - Faith is called most holy — pointing to separation from the world and its thinking, and to “healing” (oneness/wholeness) with Christ, the Holy One.
    - Healing is only in Christ and by Him — believers can add nothing to it.
    - They live from it and continually remind one another of it.
    - Believers are one in Christ and must hold this unity before one another, resisting the tendency to doubt it.
    - The Lord’s prayer (John 17:11, 21–23) has been answered: believers are one, as the Father and Son are one.
    - To deny or doubt this unity is blasphemy.
    - Nothing can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:39).
    - Believers are called to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).
    - This spiritual unity comes from the new covenant, not from flesh or common walk of life.
    - From this unity, believers come to a godly walk — they are responsible only for themselves, lest division arise.
    - The Church is a unity (God’s untouchable work), though it may not always appear so outwardly.
    - Believers pray in the Holy Ghost — placing themselves in dependence on Him.
    - The Holy Ghost is Christ hidden — Christ without visible form in this world (Romans 8:9–10; 2 Corinthians 3:17).
    - He is seated at God’s right hand (Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12).
    - Praying in the Holy Ghost means being united with Him, living in dependence on Him, and being changed in thinking.
    - This refers to John 4:21–24 — true worship is in spirit and truth, not bound to places.
    - The new covenant is a ministry of the Spirit, not the letter (2 Corinthians 3:6–8).

- The believer prays from the position of the born-again, new-creation man — it has nothing to do with speaking in tongues.

From verse 20 onwards we can follow a number of recommendations for the believers who find themselves in a hostile world. The believer ought to stand firm in it. Jude addresses the believers here as “beloved.” “Love” points to unity, to fellowship. This expression is deliberately used to indicate the contrast with the previous verse, where “separating themselves” is spoken of. The world is divided. That is precisely the characteristic of the world. The characteristic of God and His work is unity/love. The believers have been made one with God, who is love (1 John 4:8, 16), and therefore they are addressed as “beloved.” They are one and live in fellowship with the Lord and with one another. The believer does not build himself up. The Builder is Christ Himself. The Builder is namely the Son. In Hebrew the word for “builder” (baanah) is almost the same as the word for “son” (ben). That is why the Lord said: “…upon this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). This statement has two applications. The church can be the Church of the fifth dispensation, of which we form part. The rock is the testimony upon which we build, namely that Jesus is the Christ, the Son (Builder) of the living God. The statement can also be applied to the future church, namely the gathered believers from Israel and the nations. That church is also based on the same testimony of Peter. That church, moreover, begins to be built in the literal Petra, the rock fortress in Edom.
The Church of the present dispensation is built to be a habitation of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). Christ is the Builder and He is the One upon whom it is built. He is the Foundation (the first Stone), but also the chief Cornerstone (the last Stone, the Capstone; Ephesians 2:20). Believers are living stones. What was different is brought together and joined into one whole. It fits perfectly. An example of this is found in the building of the temple. The stones of the temple were hewn in the quarry. This was done so perfectly that they fitted exactly in their destined place. Nothing more needed to be done to the stones at the temple itself. They fitted perfectly. The same happens within the Church. At the moment the stones are joined together they fit perfectly! The hewing of the stones out of the quarry for the temple building is a picture of regeneration. Through regeneration a person becomes a stone of the spiritual temple. When those stones are brought together (when believers meet one another) it ought not to cost any effort to get used to one another (to fit together), for those stones fit perfectly into one another. The problem arises with believers who are not satisfied with the fellow-believers with whom they are joined. God, however, has made it fit, for God has joined them together. Whoever lives from faith has no problems with other believers. Compare Ephesians 4:2–6:

one Body — the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22–23)
one Spirit — the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9)
one hope — Christ is the God of hope (Romans 15:13; Ephesians

4:4)
one Lord — Christ is that one Lord (Romans 10:12; Philippians 2:11)
one faith — faith in the One: Christ (Acts 20:21); also: the faith of Christ (Romans 3:22, 26)
one baptism — the baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3–4)
one God and Father — primarily: the God and Father of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3)
Through that One the believers are one, for He is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:6).

Christ is the Head of His body, of which the members are one.
The believer does indeed have difficulty in standing firm in the faith. That is the spiritual conflict of the believer (2 Timothy 4:7). Yet this stands apart from the unity that exists between believers, because Christ has made them one in Himself. The believer cannot build himself up, but he is built up when he places his faith in Him. “Faith” is the starting point and the basis of the believer’s thinking.

Hebrews 11:1
Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

“Faith” is the basis for things that are (not yet) seen. On the basis of faith it will be given to the believer. Upon that he builds his expectation. That is also the meaning of his existence. If there is no more hope, there is no more life. Hope makes one live! The believer does not look to the grave. He lives continually from expectation/hope. As he grows older, he has greater expectations. His hope does not decrease, but rather increases.

Romans 13:11
And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Whoever is young still has all kinds of expectations from earthly life. Whoever grows older has not so much more to expect from earthly life. The only thing that remains is the Word of God. The believer lives through the Word of God. He builds upon the Foundation, which is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Upon that the expectation of the believer is based. That Foundation is very firm. Upon that the believer builds his life. Through faith he stands upon that Foundation. From that faith he is built up. The believer believes in the Word of God that has been “written” by the Spirit of God. God’s Spirit is the operative power of God, through and in which He reveals Himself. Through that the Word—Christ—has “come into being,” and through that we (believers) have been born again. The believer must not confuse the working of God’s Spirit with his own feelings. Whoever is not willing to take the Word of God literally and believe it will never come to know God. God does not work apart from His Word! One must take the Word of God as it is; primarily literally. If someone removes that literal meaning from Scripture, he thereby removes the foundation of everything God has written. The Bible is Spirit, brought forth by the Spirit and revealing spiritual things, but it begins on a rock-solid foundation. God speaks, and one must accept His Word literally. Behind those literal things lie many spiritual matters, but one must begin

with the literal things. The Lord therefore always said: “It is written” (among other places, Matthew 4:4, 7).
Of course the believer can have difficulty understanding the literal meaning. He can wonder what the literal meaning is of concepts such as “faith,” “soul,” “hope.” The adversary (Satan) has done everything to change the biblical meaning of these words. The result is that people often know the words, but do not know what those concepts mean. By studying Scripture, the believer learns what the Bible understands by certain concepts (by comparing Scripture with Scripture). Whoever submits himself to the Word of God will be changed in his thinking. The believer believes in the Word of God. If he truly believes the Word, that will have an effect on his thinking. The change of thinking results in a change of walk of life. This is a very profound process in the life of the believer, but it is the only way he can go. That is not the way he seeks, but through his faith in the Word he is compelled to go that way. He cannot do otherwise! What he does not want happens. That is the consequence of his faith. A believer ought to be changed by the Word of God. Through that he becomes a stranger and a sojourner. It is obviously not intended that he should become “the village idiot.” In that case he is also different from the world, but that is not what Scripture means. There are also people who deliberately seek disagreement/quarrel. There are also people who want to distinguish themselves from others and therefore invent their own faith. Such people often come into our gatherings, because they seek something eccentric. That is obviously not how it works either. It is about submitting oneself to the Word of God.
Faith is here called “most holy.” “Holiness” points to separation from the world and especially separation from the thinking of the world. It also points to “healing” (making whole), namely to oneness with Christ, the Holy One. Healing is only in Christ and because of Him. A believer can do nothing to add to or take from that. Believers can only live from it and hold it before one another that it is so. Believers are one in Christ, and they ought continually to hold that before one another, because they have a tendency to come to a different conclusion. From practice they often think that unity does not exist. The Lord prayed to His heavenly Father:

> John 17:11, 21–23
> 11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.
> 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
> 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:
> 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

This prayer of the Lord Himself has obviously been answered! The believers are therefore all one. If a believer does not believe that or thinks that unity could be broken, that is actually blasphemy. The believer ought

to believe that he has been made one in/with Christ. Nothing can separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39). The Bible calls believers to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit (in the practice of their walk of life). There exists a spiritual unity by virtue of the new covenant, the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3). From that unity the believer ought to live. That unity has not been brought about by the flesh, nor on the basis of our walk of life. Believers do not come to spiritual unity on the basis of their common walk of life. From that spiritual unity they ought to come to a walk of life. In that they are not responsible for one another, but only for themselves, for otherwise division would immediately arise again. The Church is a unity, though from the outside it may perhaps look different. That unity is God's work, and God's work is untouchable by man. Of these believers it is said that they pray in the Holy Ghost. "Praying" means: "placing oneself in dependence upon the One to whom one prays." It does not matter which form of praying ("asking prayer" or "worship") one uses. Here it is stated that the believer prays in the Holy Ghost. This means that he places himself in dependence upon the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is Christ who hides Himself. It is Christ without visible form in this world (compare Romans 8:9–10; 2 Corinthians 3:17). He is seated at the right hand of God (among other places, Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12). The believer is dependent upon Him. The believer is called to pray in the Holy Ghost. This means that he is united (joined) with the Holy Ghost. Then he lives in dependence upon the Holy Ghost. Through that he is changed in his thinking. Jude here refers to John 4, where the Lord Jesus has a conversation with a Samaritan woman.

> John 4:21–24
> 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
> 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.
> 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.
> 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Worshipping the Lord proves not to be bound to a place at all (verse 21). The hour comes and now is (has begun from that moment), that the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. God is Spirit. Whoever worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. "Truth" is the designation of the new covenant (compare John 1:17). "Spirit" is likewise the designation of the new covenant. The old covenant was the law, consisting in letters (2 Corinthians 3:7). That was a ministry of death, for the letter kills (2 Corinthians 3:6). The new covenant is a ministry of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:8). The Spirit makes alive (2 Corinthians 3:6). That Spirit is God, namely the Lord. Where that Spirit (the Lord) is, there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17). The believer ought to pray from that Spirit. In other words: he prays from the position of the born-again man. He speaks

with God from the position of the new creation. It has nothing to do with speaking in tongues!

Jude 21
Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.
Jude 22
And of some have compassion, making a difference:
Jude 23
And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

It gives severe, practical guidance:

- Live continually in God's love (unity) and look expectantly for Christ's mercy — trust His finished work.
- Be discerning in compassion — help only those who truly seek the Lord, not those who exploit.
- With urgency and care, pull some from judgement's fire — but hate all defilement and never compromise by entering the world's ways. The believer's first duty is to the Lord — stand firm, serve Him, and protect your own faith life. Never weaken yourself or the gospel by adapting to the spotted world.

Jude 21 – Keep yourselves in the love of God

- Believers are not told to bring themselves into God's love — they are already in it.
- They are to keep themselves in that love — hold fast to it, live consciously from it, and never let go.
- Love here includes unity (oneness with God and one another).
- This is the same principle as endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3) — Christ has already created this unity through the new covenant.
- Nothing can separate the believer from the love of God (Romans 8:35–39).
- Satan cannot undo this unity, but he tries to make believers doubt it. If he succeeds, they stop living from it and try to create unity themselves — thereby denying what God has already done.
- Examples: Some believers pray for the Holy Ghost, denying He has already been given to all since Christ's resurrection (the Holy Ghost is the life of Christ).
- "Keep yourselves in the love of God" means always holding fast to what God has declared: nothing can separate us. This is our only stability.
- Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life
    - Mercy = all the blessings of the new covenant (equivalent to "finding grace").
    - The believer already has eternal life (1 John 5:13), so this is not about receiving eternal life in the future.

- It means receiving mercy for the purpose of eternal life — to live in the power of that life now.
- The Lord arranges everything, sets boundaries, and rescues when needed (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- He gives strength to bear trials, enabling believers to live from grace and mercy.
- This is a test of faith: God has promised, He will do it — trust Him.

It does not say that believers should bring themselves into the love of God. It says that they should keep themselves in the love of God. Love here obviously also refers to unity. The above principle is mentioned in:
Ephesians 4:3
Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
This points to the new covenant brought about by Christ. He has brought about that unity. Nothing can separate the believer from the love of God (Romans 8:39). Satan is the only one who seeks to disturb that unity. He cannot undo that unity, but he can make the believer believe that it is happening anyway. If he achieves that, the believer no longer lives from that unity. Then that believer tries to bring about that unity himself, while God has long since brought about that unity. By his actions the believer denies what God has brought about. For example, there are believers who pray for the Holy Ghost. Thereby they deny that God has given that Holy Ghost to all believers since the resurrection of Christ. For Holy Ghost is namely the life of Christ. Whoever has not received the Holy Ghost is not born again (compare Jude 19). Whoever does not believe that he has received the Holy Ghost will pray in vain. That prayer can never be answered.
Jude says: “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” This means that the believer always holds fast to what God has said. Whatever happens, it is certain that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:35–39). That is the only stability in our life. God has spoken it, so it is so! Romans 1 through 7 explains to us how it has become possible that nothing can separate us from the love of God. The first eight chapters of the epistle to the Romans are therefore very fundamental. They describe the saving work of God. They explain what that saving work rests upon. Then it is explained in what way man can have part in that saving work. These believers look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. When the believer lives from fellowship with the Lord, then he looks for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. That mercy consists of all the blessings of the new covenant. “To obtain mercy” corresponds to “to find grace.” The believer needs that mercy and he also receives it. That mercy is unto eternal life. This does not mean that the believer will in the future ever receive eternal life, for that would contradict other passages of Scripture (among other places, 1 John 5:13). It means that he receives that mercy for the purpose of eternal life. The believer has received eternal life and therefore he receives mercy.

The Lord arranges everything and ensures that things do not go beyond a certain boundary. When that threatens to happen anyway, He comes to the rescue (compare 1 Corinthians 10:13). He gives strength to bear certain things. Thereby the believer is able to (learn to) live from grace and mercy. This is a testing of faith. God has promised it and He will do it. Upon that the believer ought to trust. The mercy is given to all who have received eternal life. That mercy is not given so that the believer will ever again receive eternal life, for that is foolishness. One is born again on the basis of faith and then receives eternal life. Eternal life stands opposite the perishable, temporal life of natural man. There are only two kinds of life: mortal life (the life of Adam) and immortal/eternal life (the life of Christ).

Jude 22 – And of some have compassion, making a difference

- Believers should not have compassion on everyone, but only on some — they must make a difference.
- Show compassion to those who genuinely seek the Lord (the Truth).
- Compassion belongs to the new covenant (like grace, mercy, Spirit, goodness).
- When Israel turns to the Lord in faith, she will receive mercy and no longer be called “Lo-ruhamah” (no mercy) but “Ruhamah” (Hosea 1:10–12; 2:23).
- The believer does as the Lord does: when someone comes to faith, he cares for them, gives time, generosity, and support.
- It is obvious to care for those drawn out of the world by faith.
- Do not waste compassion on unbelievers who only want to argue, show off, or exploit generosity — the world can handle that.
- The believer must discern: Satan quickly sends such people to distract from serving the Lord.
- Man primarily needs the Word of God (the power of God unto salvation; Romans 1:16). Share that — true interest will show itself.

Here the attitude of the believer is spoken of toward the unbelievers described in the greater part of the epistle. The believer ought not to have compassion on everyone, but only on “some.” He ought to make a difference. The believer has compassion on those who seek the Lord, namely the Truth. “Compassion” has to do with the new covenant, just like “grace,” “mercy,” “Spirit,” “goodness.” When the new covenant is applied to Israel, she will no longer be called “Lo-ammi” (not my people; Hosea 1:9) and “Lo-ruhamah” (no mercy; Hosea 1:10), but “Ammi” (my people) and “Ruhamah” (mercy; Hosea 1:10–12; 3:22). This happens when Israel in faith turns to the Lord. The believer does the same as the Lord. When someone comes to the Lord (to faith), he will have compassion on him. This means that he must take care of him. It is obvious that the believer takes care of the one who has been drawn out of the world by faith. Compassion also has to do with time, generosity, and the like. It is of no use to the believer to spend that on unbelievers who only want to discuss or show off. The world is happy to abuse generosity (sharing) as well.

The believer is willing to place his time and goods (himself) at the service of the Lord. He wants to serve the Lord gladly. Satan is then quick to send people across his path who do not wish to serve the Lord at all, but pretend they do. If the believer occupies himself with them, it is fruitless. It leads to nothing. He is rather drawn away from the things of the Lord. Man primarily needs the Word of God, for that is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). That the believer ought to share. From that it becomes apparent whether someone is truly interested. When someone is not interested in the Word of God, the believer need not have compassion on him. The world is there for that. The believer must be aware of that, for otherwise he will be abused by the adversary.

Jude 23 – And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh

- Some people must be saved with fear — pulled forcefully out of the fire (judgement).
- This requires urgency and strength, more than casual gospel presentation.
- In the next (sixth) dispensation, this will be literal: during the great tribulation (“fire”), some weak seekers must be seized and hidden from the adversary.
- In our (fifth) dispensation, it may mean forcefully pulling someone away from destructive influences that prevent them from coming to the Lord.
- The believer’s primary responsibility is his own life — serving the Lord and standing firm in faith.
- Do not help the weak if it weakens you — know your limits.
- Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh
    - Hate everything defiled by the flesh — all worldly things are spotted.
    - When helping someone out of the world, do not go in yourself — pull them out without being drawn in.
    - The risk is great (especially in the next dispensation) of being pulled to the wrong side.
    - Do not adapt to the environment or mindset of the world to reach people — the other must adapt to God’s truth.
    - The believer has aligned with God’s thought-world; God does not adapt.
    - Adapting too much risks losing the gospel’s power — it may cease to be the gospel.
    - In the next dispensation, everything is defiled — pull others out, but stay out yourself.
    - This is for their good and yours.

“To save someone with fear” means: “to pull someone out of the fire.” This is done with force. “Fire” is the designation for “judgment.” “To pull someone out of the fire” is more than holding the gospel before someone in a non-committal way. In the next dispensation this is more obvious than in our (fifth) dispensation. The fire in the sixth dispensation is the

description of the great tribulation. Then it may be necessary to seize with force people who want to come to the Lord but are weak in it, and to preserve them (to let them go underground) from the adversary. In our dispensation it may sometimes be necessary to pull someone with force away from the influences to which he is exposed. Those influences can make it impossible for him to do what he would nevertheless like to do, namely: come to the Lord. To snatch someone from the enemy sometimes requires more than preaching the gospel. The believer ought obviously to be aware that he is primarily responsible for his own life. He ought primarily to serve the Lord and remain firm in the faith. It is of no use to have compassion on someone who is weak if by doing so he himself becomes weak. The believer must therefore know well what he is doing. His first responsibility is toward the Lord. In addition, it may be necessary for him to use the strength he has received to pull others out of the fire.Then it says: “hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” This means that one must hate everything that is spotted. All things of the world are spotted. This is of great importance in connection with the first part of this verse. The believer can have compassion on someone who must be pulled out of the world. Yet the chance is very great that the believer himself will be pulled to the wrong side. Especially in the next dispensation this danger is very great.

There are believers who adapt themselves to a certain environment in order to bring the gospel within that environment. Yet it then proves that they are completely “swallowed up” by that environment and perish in it. The believer must be aware of that and ensure that he always remains standing outside such an environment. He may think that he must adapt to the other person’s mindset in order to tell him the gospel. This is incorrect, for it is impossible to know someone else’s mindset. Moreover, a believer cannot adapt to it. The other must rather adapt to the believer’s line of thought. The believer has adapted himself to the thought-world of God. God does not adapt Himself! This principle also applies to the preaching of the gospel. If the believer adapts himself to someone in such a way that that person fully understands the gospel, the chance is great that it is no longer the gospel at all. The believer must keep far from the things that are spotted by the flesh and thereby have become defiled. In the next dispensation all things are spotted. If he has compassion on someone, he does not go into it himself, but he pulls the other out of it. That is not only in his own interest, but also in the interest of the one over whom he has compassion.

Jude here warns very emphatically. We see everywhere around us that people adapt themselves to “the target group” in order to bring the gospel. Thereby they themselves lose the message and the power of that message. Usually they end up with social/medical help and the like and forget that it is actually about bringing the gospel. Social or medical help is never of primary importance, for everyone dies in the end. Therefore, one primarily needs eternal life. It is not about someone’s physical need, but about his spiritual need! Therefore, the Word of God ought to be preached, for that is the power of God unto salvation. Yet it must never lead to weakening of one’s own faith life.

Jude 24–25
24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,
25 To the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power before all ages, and now, and unto all the ages (or: unto all eternity). Amen.

These closing verses form the doxology — the grand climax and culmination of the entire Epistle. After warning extensively about the unbelieving world that rejects God, Jude directs the believer's gaze upward to the only wise God, our Saviour, who is able to preserve and glorify His people.
Key Points:

1. The Doxology's Core Message
    - To Him (the only wise God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord) be glory, majesty, dominion, and power — both now and forever.
    - This is the believer's proper response: direct his entire life toward God, giving Him glory in all things.
    - The doxology echoes the purpose of life itself: the glorification of God (the Father through the Son).
2. God's Ability to Preserve and Present (v. 24)
    - He is able to keep you from falling — not that the believer never stumbles, but that God is fully capable of preserving him when he lives from grace and faith.
    - If the believer prays in the Holy Ghost and lives in union with Him, he does not fall.
    - God grants grace and mercy so the believer stands firm — this is not the believer's merit, but Christ's.
    - He is also able to present you faultless before His glory with exceeding joy — the creation (His garment) will be cleansed, sin removed, all to His own glory.
    - Believers of this dispensation will be presented faultless to share in Christ's glory — the Church is called to this end.
    - The Church is the Body of Christ and therefore shares in His glory.
    - This presentation is entirely by grace (Ephesians 2:8).
3. Joy and the New Covenant
    - "With exceeding joy" is added — joy is a hallmark of the new covenant.
    - The gospel is good news; the old covenant (law) was a ministry of death (2 Corinthians 3:7).
    - Grace justifies man — not to the sinner's glory, but to the glory of the One who shows grace.
    - The gospel is only truly good news when only grace is preached.
    - If preaching is not good news, it is not God's Word.

- Despite difficult circumstances, the believer has joy in the Lord (Philippians 4:4) — the message of God lifts him above them.

4. The Only Wise God
    - He alone is wise (Proverbs 8); whoever seeks wisdom finds God.
    - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10).
    - God’s wisdom is hidden in mystery (1 Corinthians 2:6–8): since Christ’s resurrection, God draws people out of the world into the kingdom of His Son (Colossians 1:13).
    - This kingdom is hidden now (fifth dispensation), but will be revealed in the future.
    - The world is dead in sins (Ephesians 2:1), but God gives the possibility of life.
    - The wisdom of God is so profound that man cannot fathom it (Romans 11:33) — yet He has revealed it in His Word.
5. Dominion and Power
    - “Dominion and power” is another synonym pair.
    - The believer ascribes all dominion and power to the only Sovereign — the Mighty One far above everything.
    - This makes the believer untouchable to the enemy (James 4:7).
    - If he knows he is God’s servant, he is no longer under Satan’s influence — he is immune.
    - This applies both now and unto all eternity — not just future, but present. God has already given many blessings.
6. The Perfect Has Come (1 Corinthians 13:8–13)
    - The perfect (Christ and His completed work) has already come — the imperfect (childish things) has matured or been completed.
    - Christ already has glory, majesty, dominion, and power — the kingdom has come (though not yet fully visible on earth).
    - He sits on the highest throne at God’s right hand (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9).
    - He is Priest and King forever after the order of Melchisedec (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7).
7. Primary Focus of the Epistle
    - Jude speaks mainly about the sixth dispensation (the 40 years after the rapture).
    - Believers then will live before Christ is revealed on the throne of His glory.
    - They acknowledge only the only Sovereign — the only wise God, their Saviour.
    - He will keep them from falling — not by their strength, but by His grace and power.
    - They believe (as we do) in the living, unchangeable, imperishable Word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

The greater part of the epistle speaks of an unbelieving world that rejects God. The believer is informed about the circumstances of natural man and of the world, so that he may recognise them when he comes into contact with them. That is necessary, for in the next dispensation he will come into contact with them. The believer has two possibilities: either he is swept along in the currents of the world, or he goes into the only wise God, the Saviour. He forms part of the immovable kingdom (Hebrews 12:28).

The main clause is: “Now unto him… be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.” To Him be glory! This means that the believer ought actually to direct his life toward Him. This principle also occurs in the epistle to the Romans.

> Romans 6:4
> Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Christ was raised up to the glory of the Father. So also the believers have been raised up to the glory of the Father. Here this is described as “walking in newness of life.” Christ was raised up so that He might glorify the Father. He lives, and through His life His Father is glorified. As Christ does this, so ought the believers to do likewise. In other words: believers ought to live to the glory of the Father. By way of explanation this is said in other words. The newness of life in which they walk is likewise to the glory of the Father. All life in creation exists so that the Creator might be glorified; though that usually does not happen (Romans 1:21). Because of sin little has come of that glorification. When a man is born again, he can live to the glory of the Father. To that end Christ was raised up, and His life is to the glory of the Father. To that end the believers have been raised up with Him, so that He might receive honour in their lives. We find the same thing in:

> 2 Corinthians 5:15
> And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Christ died for all, therefore all died. He died for all so that those who live (afterwards) should live for Christ. Christ is the One who died and rose again for them. Those who live (believers) have shared in His resurrection and ought therefore to live to the glory of Christ. The purpose of life is: the glorification of God. Natural life does not correspond to this and cannot do so. The new life can correspond to it. That is why the believer is called to walk in newness of life. Why should glory be given to God? Because He is able to keep you from falling. If the believer does not fall, it is because He keeps him from it. He grants him grace and mercy so that he stands firm and does not stumble. It is therefore not the merit of the believer, but of Christ. He is able to do it. Presumably the believer does stumble, but that is because he does not build on his most holy faith. That is why it does not say that He keeps the believer from falling, but that He is able to do so. If the believer prays in the Holy Ghost and lives from union with Him, then he does not fall. The epistle to the Hebrews has the same background as

the epistle of Jude. In Hebrews it is assumed that the whole world has been brought out of Egypt, but must still come to faith. In the epistle to the Hebrews this is based on Old Testament typology. Jude scarcely does this at all.
The Lord is indeed able to keep the believer from falling, but He can do so only if the believer lives from grace and faith. The believer has indeed been saved by grace, but afterwards he can continue to live in/according to the flesh. In that case he obviously stumbles. This does not mean that he will then be lost, for that is impossible. It does mean that he feels as though he has lost the Lord; that there is separation. This has a paralysing effect. Such a believer can only be raised up by the Lord Himself. When the believer gives Him glory, he is kept from falling. If he gives Him glory, he submits himself to the Lord and serves Him. Moreover, the Lord Himself has an interest in keeping from falling those who serve Him. The Lord cares for His servants (2 Corinthians 3:4–6). The Father has an interest in preserving His children so that He may be served through them. It is a reciprocal relationship. If the believer leads his own life, God has no interest whatever in keeping him from falling. If he leads his own life, he does not even want to be helped. He manages everything himself. In that case the Lord is not served, and He will not keep him from falling.
Moreover, the Lord is able to present the believer faultless before His glory, with exceeding joy. The creation is the garment (the outward appearance) of the Creator. It is to His own glory when His garment is cleansed. Sin and the effect of sin are therefore taken away to His own glory. The reconciling work that God accomplishes in Christ has primarily the glorification of God Himself as its purpose. Moreover, the believers of our dispensation are presented faultless before His presence so that they may share in His glory. To that end the Church has been called. The Church is the Body of Christ and therefore shares in Christ and thereby in His glory. When it is shown in the future that the believers have not stumbled and have been presented faultless, it will be because that was the work of Christ. It is all grace! (compare Ephesians 2:8)“With exceeding joy” is added at the end. “Joy” is one of the characteristics of the new covenant. The gospel is good news. The sorrowful message is a ministry of death (2 Corinthians 3:7). That is the old covenant. The preaching of the new covenant means that man is justified not by the law, but by God’s grace. That is not to the glory of the sinner. It is to the glory of the One who has shown grace. That is joy for the sinner. The gospel is only good news when only grace is preached. The question the believer ought to ask at every preaching is: “Is it good news?” When it is not good news, then it can never be the Word of God. The new covenant is always good news. When it is not, then it is not to the glory of God. The epistle, which speaks particularly about the suffering and humiliation of the believer, mentions the concepts of “joy” several times (Philippians 1:4, 25; 2:2, 29; 4:1) and “rejoice” (Philippians 1:18; 2:17–18, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10).The circumstances of the believer do not always give occasion for joy, but that joy is present in the Lord (Philippians 4:4). Despite the sorrowful circumstances in which the believer may find himself, he has good news. The message of God lifts him above the circumstances. That is why the message of God is good

news. If the preaching is not good news, then it is no message at all. In that case one might just as well stand in front of a mirror. Then one is confronted with one’s own miserable circumstances. One then realises, if all is well, that one needs mercy. Man does not need to be preached to that he lives in miserable circumstances, for he knows that without preaching. The miserable situation is only confirmed by it, and thereby the circumstances only become more miserable. Many believers sink deeper and deeper into miserable circumstances because they hear wrong preaching. The Bible is indeed used for it, but it is not a biblical message. The believer needs the good news; daily! Then he can rejoice. All this is to the glory of the only wise God, our Saviour. He is the God in whom alone wisdom dwells. He is wisdom (compare Proverbs 8). Whoever seeks wisdom will find God. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (among other places, Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). The wisdom of God exists in mystery.

> 1 Corinthians 2:6–8
> 6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:
> 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:
> 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The wisdom of God is expressed precisely in this: that since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ God draws people out of the world and gives them part in His kingdom. Mankind is dead in sins and trespasses (Ephesians 2:1), but God gives man the possibility to pass into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13). That kingdom is hidden in this (fifth) dispensation. From the outside nothing in particular is seen, but God is accomplishing His work in the believer. In the next dispensation that kingdom will be revealed. Here on earth it does not seem very special, but in the future it will prove to be very special indeed. Then it will also become evident that everything was done from the riches of His grace. It happens through the Spirit and in secret, but it will be revealed in the future. It is so special that man would not believe it if it were told him (Acts 13:41). The wisdom of God cannot be fathomed by man (Romans 11:33). That wisdom God has revealed in His Word. Man cannot find that wisdom, but He has made His wisdom known. Through that wisdom believers have become children of God. His wisdom has brought everything into being, and therefore He ought to receive the glory. To the only wise God be also dominion and power. “Dominion and power” is likewise a synonym. The believer ascribes dominion and power to Him. He acknowledges Him as the Mighty and Powerful One who is far above everything. It means that he keeps far from anyone who would exercise power or might over him. For he acknowledges only one power/might: the only Sovereign. That makes him untouchable to the enemy (compare James 4:7). If he knows that he is a servant of God, then he no longer stands under the influence of Satan. He knows that Satan exists, but he is immune to him. This applies both now and unto all

eternity. It could also have said simply “unto all eternity.” Of course it applies to the future (unto all eternity), but something more is added. It applies even now. It is easy to “reason away” everything to the future. Yet God has already given many blessings now.

> 1 Corinthians 13:8–13
> 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.
> 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.
> 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.
> 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
> 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.
> 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

The perfect has already come. Therefore, the imperfect (that which was of a child) ought to have passed away. It is not gone, but it has matured/been completed. When the kingdom of Christ is revealed on earth, glory, majesty, dominion, and power will be given to Him. This is right, but it is also true that He has already received that glory, majesty, dominion, and power, that the kingdom has come (though not yet visibly revealed on earth), and that glory and majesty have been established. In the future He will sit upon the throne of His glory (Matthew 25:31), but that concerns His throne in Jerusalem. Then His kingdom will be revealed. Yet that is not the highest throne there is. Since His resurrection He sits upon the highest throne there is: at the right hand of God. God has highly exalted Him (Philippians 2:9) and has given Him all power in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). He is Priest and King after the order of Melchisedec, and He remains so for ever (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:3, 17, 21).

This epistle speaks primarily about the sixth dispensation. The believers of that dispensation live before the Lord will be revealed upon the throne of His glory. They do not acknowledge the beast, nor the king of Babel. They do not acknowledge Satan as their lord. They acknowledge only One: the only Sovereign, the only wise God, their Saviour. He will also keep them from falling. They do not do this by their own strength, but by His strength and grace. They believe, just as we do, in the unchangeable and imperishable Word of God, which is living and abides for ever (1 Peter 1:23).